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THE
ARISTOCRACY OF ENGLAND :

A HISTORY FOR THE PEOPLE.

BY JOHN HAMPDEN, JUNR.

CROMWELL. What then is the great root of all our grievances?

PYM. The Aristocracy! Give us their true history, and you unriddle the secret of every national embarrassment!

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
EFFINGHAM WILSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE.

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"THE protection of THE LIBERTY OF BRITAIN is a duty which they owe to themselves, who enjoy it; to their ancestors, who transmitted it down; and to their posterity, who will claim at their hands this, the best birthright, and noblest inheritance of mankind."—BLACKSTONE'S COMMENTARIES, vol. iv. p. 443.

"THERE is one thing which, above all, the people should get rid of, namely, their reverence for even the worthless portion of the Aristocracy. It is a false and worthless idolatry; a bowing down to Baal. I reverence and respect the laws when they are the embodiment of just principles; but I cannot countenance the reverence paid by the people to those who oppress, grieve them down, and scourge them. I hope the day will arrive when they will throw off the burdens with which they are oppressed by this Aristocracy, and stand forth the bravest, the freest, and the most virtuous people on the face of the earth."—SPEECH OF JOHN BRIGHT, Esq., at Covent Garden, Feb. 27th, 1844.

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THE Author has only simply to remark, by way of Preface, that this work has been the favourite subject of his thoughts for these ten years past, and has for six years occupied his pen. Since he has been engaged upon it, he has seen one or two announcements of treatises on the same subject, but he has carefully abstained from reading them, not wishing to disturb the clear impressions of his own theory with the plans of others, and material for his own purposes being only too abundant. The only difficulty has been to extract, from our best histories and most authentic sources, the mass of luminous facts, and to arrange and condense them, so as to illustrate the *grand fact* of the present political period, and “the great root of all our national evils.”

At the very moment that this volume is going through the press, the most monstrous of the aristocratic impositions of which it complains—the Corn Law—is doomed to extinction by the parliament and people of England. Providence, by the gift of a drenching summer, and the consequent disease of the potato, has sent the necessary pressure to compel the people to speak out. Public opinion, and that great organ of public opinion—the Anti-Corn-Law League—have compelled the startled government to listen to the people’s voice. Wonderful conversions of public men in the hour of terror have taken place. Our gracious Queen has shown herself worthy of the great throne on which she sits, by her

sympathies and care for her suffering people. Her heart is now known to beat with a noble desire for popular and liberal measures. The prime minister himself has stood forth as the worthy servant of such a monarch—as the apostle of Free Trade! These are glorious triumphs for the popular cause. Never did public circumstances so auspiciously show themselves in England since the great revolution of 1688. Let the nation take care, *this time*, to secure the full fruits of them. Let the example of the League show that public opinion, if it please, is omnipotent. Let it not stop short with the abolition of the Corn Laws and the reduction of certain duties. Let it remember that with the abolition of the Corn Laws only one of a thousand aristocratic evils is eradicated. Time will show that cheap bread alone will not enable us to remedy all the mischiefs which remain. Our debt is eight hundred millions; our annual taxation fifty millions; and these will lie as an incubus on our manufacturing exertions, and on the cheapness of everything in England. Let the people remember that aristocratic corruption and the sources of its corruption still remain in the state; that the root of the mischief is still there; that the franchise is still restricted to a few; that Providence will not every year interfere with the seasons to remedy what we should remedy ourselves. Public opinion, under the auspices of a liberal and enlightened monarch, having now shown its power, should maintain its ascendancy till every aristocratic evil is obliterated; till the aristocracy are thrust back to their own house; till the dukes and lords cease to meddle in the election of the Commons; in a word, till our constitution and prosperity are actually restored.

February, 1846.

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THE ARISTOCRACY OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

"God has made of one blood all the nations of the earth."

AN Indian and a Kentuckian once made an agreement to hunt in company, and divide equally the game which they might chance to kill. Unfortunately, a crow and a wild turkey were all they shot. "Well," said the Kentuckian, at the end of the day, "as we are to divide equally, you take the crow, and I'll take the turkey; or I'll take the turkey, and you take the crow."—"How's that?" inquired the Indian. The Kentuckian in rapid accents repeated his proposal, to which the Indian, after a blank and puzzled look, consented, but with the remark:—"It *sounds* all very fair; but, somehow or other, *you* always get the turkey, and *I* always get the crow."

This is an admirable illustration of the mode, not only in which the Americans have dealt with the Indians, but in which the aristocracy in all countries and ages have dealt with the people. Everywhere the cunning and the strong have leagued with the mass, under pretence of achieving the common good, but with the secret object of securing merely their own. They have put themselves at the head of nations, with the proposal to divide equally the benefits accruing from this partnership, but they have invariably contrived to keep the turkey, and put off the poor bamboozled people with the crow.

It is the curse of humanity that marriages and modes of government must be entered into at the very period which is the least adapted to secure a rational bargain. Both individuals and nations are compelled by the very nature of things to negotiate

the most momentous contract of their lives at the age when they have the least experience. Hence the vast and dismal wreck of both domestic and national happiness. Ignorance and passion are the guides ; deception, and often irretrievable misery, are the legitimate consequences. The parties have neither had time to discover the realities of life, nor the true character of those with whom they enter into the most awful and indissoluble unions. They learn these only when it is too late.

If we look round us, either at home or abroad, we shall see that the galling grievances of nations are all derived from this source. Their ancestors, in the days of barbarism, darkness, and violence, have entered into this absurd alliance with Cunning and Strength. They have hunted with them, and come off with the crow. They have surrendered the fearful machine of government into base hands, and by that very machine they are now crushed and ground. They have begun exactly at the wrong end of things, allowing Cunning and Strength to usurp what should only be committed, with the subtlest caution and under the most stringent restrictions, to the temporary keeping of Wisdom and Goodness ; and the whole business of politics is, and has been throughout all generations, and in all countries, to remedy the consequences of this fatal concession ; to wrest this mighty trust of the governing power out of unworthy hands. This has been the anxious toil of ages ; this is the whole, the agonised, the incessant strife of the daily life of millions, and hitherto—in vain. And why ? Because the delegated power of government is the most awful trust in the world. It is so pregnant with the most immeasurable consequences ; it involves so deeply the happiness of whole ages, and of every individual, that even in the best, the bravest, and the wisest times, it cannot be put into any hands but with the profoundest fears, and seldom without the most mortifying consequences.

There is a good old anecdote of a gentleman who, during his lifetime, had surrendered his real estate to his children, and had thenceforward been treated with the same ingratitude which befel King Lear, till he caused a great iron chest, which he had carefully stowed away under his bed, to be shown to his sons, and said, "There lies, after all, the most invaluable of my treasures, far exceeding in worth all my lands." This brought back to him reverence and obedience. On his death, eager was the rush of the sons to the opening of the chest, in which, however, was found only a great mallet, on which was written this rude rhyme :—

"He who parts with his power before he is dead,
Take ye this mallet and knock him o' th' head."

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The moral of this distich is not the less applicable to nations than to individuals. The whole mass of history is but its melancholy inculcation. There is not a nation on the face of the earth where we do not see the fatal effects of this weak surrender; which has not been cruelly knocked on the head for it. Governments treat the people, not as their masters, but as their slaves: not as the power from which their commission and authority are derived, but as creatures subject by God and nature to their domination, for that domination's sake: not as the great family of rational and immortal beings, by whom they are appointed to the management of their necessary affairs, but as a "rascal rabble" over whom they are, of their own inherent right, set to pinch and peel, to riot and to revel. They regard themselves not as the elected servants of the community, to whom they should, therefore, render all respect, and towards whom they should cherish love and gratitude, for whom they should labour to procure nothing but happiness, and to whom they should be thankful for their pay; but as slave-drivers, whose great merit consists in outraging every feeling of independence in the self-subjected multitude, and in enriching themselves at their expense.

The business of nations is like the business of individuals; it requires the employment of stipendiaries to carry it on for the good of the master and his family. THAT IS THE ONLY OBJECT AND END OF MANAGEMENT, WHETHER OF A FAMILY OR OF A NATION.

Whence come, then, the absurdity and the misery, that while the servants of a family, or the stewards of individuals, know themselves and their office, and labour in all due subordination for the good of their employers, the servants and the stewards of nations no sooner are entrusted with their commissions, than they undergo the most villanous metamorphosis; reverse the very order of nature; turn the means into the end, the masters into the servants, and ride on the necks of their creators, laughing at their credulity, and armed with whips and spurs, which dig into their very vitals, and drain their very life's-blood?

It is because the world has not yet, with all its wit and wisdom, outlived the vile witchcraft of its barbarism. It is because it has not yet, with all its boasted strength of knowledge, been able to burst the chains, which, in the darkness of its early ages, were wrapped round its soul. There still lie the poison of early prejudice, and the subtle might of habit. There still lurks, in the dungeons of its unenlightened depths, the brutal Giant Despair, who drags down its knights of enterprise, and "grinds their bones to make him bread." Free do we call ourselves, while we stand

in the eye of heaven shaking our chains, and the very angels blush at the ignominious spectacle!

In the first ages our fathers, a rude and uninstructed multitude, seeking their daily bread in the sweat of their brow, needed leaders against their foes, who sought to snatch their hard-earned morsel from them, and magistrates to settle their differences regarding it, amongst themselves. Then came CUNNING and STRENGTH, and put themselves at their head. They indeed rendered them great services, and they might have rendered them more. They delivered them from their external foes, but the mischief of it was that they became, as they intended, their tyrants. As the horse in the fable requested the man to mount his back and avenge him of his enemies, so Cunning and Strength, once mounted on the back of mankind, could never again be unseated. The iron bit was in the mouth, the rowels were in the side, the wire-lash was on the shoulders, and the man-multitude became a slave. It had no time to look even into its grievances. To dig, to hunt, to swelter in hewing, and in groaning under burdens for the sustaining morsel, was the bitter lot of all rude people; and when they ceased to be rude, they found themselves the hereditary slaves of Cunning and Strength.

The worst evil was not the mere subjection—it was that by which subjection was perpetuated. Cunning and Strength had called in to their aid Superstition, in all its forms and terrors. They had abused the weak mind of the unlettered multitude with the notions of DIVINE RIGHT; they had arrayed themselves in the triple panoply of kingcraft, priestcraft, and aristocraft. Heaven, and Earth, and Hell were peopled by them with powers of splendour and punishment, which proclaimed their own everlasting lordship, and frightened the multitude into everlasting submission. Kings and lords, priests and warriors, swarmed on the earth, and lorded it with lash and sword, with anathemas and manacles, over the affrighted millions. War, which commenced as a necessary evil, became arrayed in artificial glories, which made it at once eternal, and the annihilation of all liberty. The objects and ends of civil government were forgotten or carefully concealed; and to this hour, spite of all our advance in science and philosophy, the science and the philosophy of government remain practically unasserted. We cringe still beneath the spectres of the past. "The child is still father of the man." The world in its youth was terrified with the nursery monsters of goblins and fiends; and now, in its manhood, it still trembles in the dark.

But the most fatal error in this career was that of suffering the growth of an ARISTOCRACY. The fable of the bundle of

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sticks has here been most grievously verified. The old man, on his death-bed, showed his sons that they could not break a faggot, but that they could snap each individual stick as so many reeds. And kingcraft you could have snapped; priestcraft you might have broken; but kingcraft and priestcraft, bound up in the great faggot of aristocracy, became the dreadful abomination of desolation—the triple power of despotism; and to this hour the world lies crushed beneath it.

But shall this endure for ever? Shall this baleful faggot never be unbound? Shall the knowledge and the power of mankind be unavailing against this antiquated contrivance of CUNNING and STRENGTH? Shall we still crouch and tremble before the goblin fables of barbarous antiquity? Shall all our knowledge of history and of our right—all the grand principles of our divine religion, whose very foundation truths are that "God has made of one blood all the nations of the earth;" and that "He is no respecter of persons"—shall not all these enable us to resist and hurl down this tyranny of caste? Shall we not, millions as we are, and men as we are, come to know our invincible might, and to rely on it as omnipotent over all the arts of *Cunning* and the slavery of usage, to make us free?

Howitt, in his "History of Priestcraft," has given to one head of the triple monster a mortal blow. It may linger, but the shaft sticks in the wound, and it will never heal. But this is but one of the heads, and not the chief one. The great head and seat of life is—ARISTOCRACY. It is this which maintains the pride of kingcraft and the subtlety of priestcraft; it is out of aristocracy that the priestly power springs: it is for its purposes that it is cherished and upheld. Aristocracy looks to royalty as one source of honour and wealth, and to priestcraft as another. The host of priests spring from the loins of aristocracy, and become a section of it, and one of its most zealous armies of defence. Cut away aristocracy, and you unbind the whole mystery of the iniquity of oppression. Kings, without an aristocracy as a body-guard, must rule with mildness, or soon cease to rule at all. Priests without an aristocracy become weak as water. They sink from the subtlest tyrants and sticklers for tyranny into the harmless pastors, the humble and useful parish teachers. But so long as the triple faggot is left bound, it defies the efforts of the world, and in it lurk all the demons of rapine, greed, and insolence, which plague mankind.

History has shown that this great plague which still sticks to our race, and fills the modern world with everlasting bitterness and distress, foiling all the force of experience, and nullifying all the blessings of civilisation, is of eastern origin. It appeared

in those regions of ancient despotism in the earliest ages. It established there, under the guidance of CUNNING and STRENGTH, the spirit of caste; the worst, the most malignant, the most disastrous spirit which ever issued from the regions of perdition. This spirit, with the aid of priestcraft, with forged revelations and supernatural terrors, divided mankind into two classes—the aristocrat and the slave. In the East, this hideous caste became, as it were, the fixed law of nature and of nations, which no man dared to question, and which yet rules there in all its force. Hindoos, Chinese, Assyrians, Egyptians, it mattered not who or what, all became the servile victims of this caste. But it did not continue only to dwell there. It marched out with the overflowing population, and inundated the whole western world. The very Greeks, the most glorious people which ever appeared in past times, could not escape its infection. Their freest forms of government betrayed traces of it. There were still seen—the aristocrat and the slave. In Europe, it developed itself in the feudal system—a system which gave to the aristocratic classes all the lands and all the honours of the countries which were invaded, and to the great mass of the people who fought out and won those realms, the labour and bondage of serfdom. In other words, here were again awarded—the turkey and the crow.

In the course of this volume I shall show what has been the career of this feudalism. I shall show that in all the nations of Europe, it has run such a career of insolence and crime, of greed and despotism, that it has in turn brought every nation to the verge of destruction, has involved it in torrents of blood and ages of calamity, until it has eventually caused the people or the sovereign to crush it, or to chase it away. That it has, nevertheless, generally contrived, more or less, again to insinuate itself. That where it has come *the most* to prevail, there have public calamity and popular distress again appeared—where *least* it has been able to effect its return, there, even under despotic forms of government, the people have enjoyed comfort and peace. What examples of this will France, England, and Germany afford us! In this place, however, it is only necessary to allude to the fact, and then to turn the eyes of the reader to the singular spectacle of the state of aristocracy in our own country, and to its most deplorable consequences.

The position of England and its aristocracy at the present moment is, in fact, the most singular spectacle which the history of the world presents. It is the spectacle of the greatest of nations suffering the most suicidal wounds from its own hands. It is the spectacle of the most industrious and enterprising of people robbed of the fruits of all its labours by those who are

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too rich themselves to need to be robbers. It is the spectacle of a nation which, of all others, boasts of its freedom, which of all others has most nobly fought and bled for that freedom—most artfully enslaved by its aristocracy. It is that of a nation hugging itself on its finely-balanced constitution, “the envy and admiration of the world;” on its three estates, King, Lords, and Commons, while, in reality, that cunningly-devised system has been long converted into a trap for its liberties—a pitfall to swallow up its wealth—a delusion to cover it with debts and miseries.

What, indeed, are these kings, lords, and commons? Where does the power said to be invested in them really reside? Let the people of England ask themselves that great question, and they will find in its answer the one great root and source, the one great mystery of all their troubles. They will find that their boasted House of Commons is but the engine of the aristocracy to cheat them with a show of freedom, while they, through its means, rob and plunder and scourge them to their heart's content. They will find that they have not the power to move a finger of the House of Commons: that the aristocracy,—such a mighty and wealthy and luxurious aristocracy as the world never before saw—are, in truth, the possessors of all and everything in England. They possess the crown, for it is the great bauble and talisman of all their wealth and honours. They possess the House of Commons, by their sons, their purses, and their influence. They possess the church and the state, the army and the navy. They possess all offices at home and abroad. They possess the land at home, and the colonies to the end of the earth. And, what is more, they possess the property and the profits of every man, for they have only to stretch out their great arm in a vote of the House of Commons, and they can take it as they please.

If there be a man who doubts this awful state of things; who doubts whether England,—the great, indefatigable, high-hearted England,—be the patrimony and possession of the aristocracy; let him attempt to check any act of extravagance; to work any necessary reform; to extend, in the slightest degree, the liberty of the subject, through the medium of the House of Commons.

For my part, it shall, in this volume, be my task to lay bare the one great and hideous evil of England: to show the one great cause of all our derangements and all our distresses,—the usurpation of the total powers of the constitution by an overgrown aristocracy, and the strange monstrosities which, in the course of this usurpation, it has perpetrated.

CHAPTER II.

"Howe'er that be, it seems to me
 'Tis only noble to be good ;
 True hearts are more than coronets,
 And simple faith than Norman blood."

ALFRED TENNYSON.

THE period from which the English aristocracy dates its origin is that of the Norman Conquest. Aristocracy, indeed, there was in the country before, but that was annihilated by the Normans ; and this epoch is the vaunted birth-day of our nobility. There is nothing of which we hear so much as of the pride of a descent from these first Norman nobles ; of the pure and immaculate blood derived from this long descent. To say nothing of the wretched fallacy of blood and descent,—for the most wretched and mischievous fallacy it is which ever cursed the human race,—being the pretext for every insolence, and every species of tyranny amongst men, and being besides, the most hollow bubble that ever was blown by pride, for, there is no beggar who, if he could trace his pedigree, would not find himself descended from kings, and no king who is not descended from beggars,—we will take the trouble to refer to the histories of the time, and show what these Norman conquerors really were. We shall then find that, so far from being a set of men to be proud of as ancestors, there cannot be a more scandalously disgraceful origin. They were, in fact, a swarm of the most desperate and needy adventurers ; "a rascal rabble" of vagabond thieves and plunderers. They were not, in fact, one half of them, what they are pretended to be,—Normans ; but collected by proclamation, and by lavish promises of sharing in the plunder of conquered England,—vultures from every wind of heaven rushing to the field of British carnage. We shall find that, allowing the claims of such families as now can trace a clear descent from these men—and these are very few indeed—even such of them as were Normans, were but of the lower and more rapacious grade. The great vultures fleshed themselves to the throat with the first spoil, and returned home, while their places were obliged to be repeatedly supplied, through renewed proclamations, and renewed offers of the plunder of the Anglo-Saxons, from the still hungry tribes of knights who were wandering and fighting anywhere for bloody bread.

Again we shall come to the curious question, who the Normans

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actually were? Who actually they were who actually were Normans? And here will come another singular laying bare of the proud pretences of our proud nobles. Forsooth, they are descended from the gallant and chivalrous Normans. They will be descended from them and them alone. There is not a soul of them that will claim the honour of descent from the Danes. Oh no! The barbarous and bloody Danes, they are a scandal and an abomination! They are thieves, pirates, plunderers, and savages. Nobody is descended from them, except some plebeians in the North of England, and except that the rabble rout of the common people are contaminated with their blood. And yet, who are the Normans? Why, the Danes!

Yes! the proud aristocracy of England, such of them as have any long known descent at all, are actually descended from the Danes! They are the legitimate issue of this bloody and barbarous people that nobody wishes to acknowledge as ancestors. The Danes, driven from England, fell on the shores of France, and amid the distractions of that kingdom, laid Paris in ashes, and seized on that district which thence received from these Northmen or Normans, its name of Normandy. Here, though settled too comfortably for their deserts, they never ceased to keep an eye on the far richer prize of England, from which, for their cruelties and fiery devastations, they had been chased away. In the time of the Conqueror, they had been settled about two centuries in France; and though they had acquired a considerable degree of external civilisation, and much martial discipline, yet, if we are to judge by their proceedings on the acquisition of England, they had lost none of their greedy hunger of spoil, nor of their reckless and ruthless disposition to shed blood. Edward the Confessor was the son of Emma of Normandy, a notorious woman. He had been chiefly brought up at the Norman court, and, during his reign, the Norman nobles flocked over in crowds to England, and showed themselves as greedy and rapacious as any of their ancestors, the Danes, had been. They engrossed every great office on which they could lay their hands, especially in the church; and through their rapacity and insolence, became detested by the people. The conduct of a party of them under the Count of Boulogne, in 1051, occasioned an outbreak of popular wrath in Dover, which brought the kingdom to the very point of a civil war, and only ended by filling the army as full of these harpies as the church had been before. The effeminate and misled king became surrounded by countless shoals of them, crowding to enrich themselves. Amongst these, he invited one, William of Normandy, who made good use of the visit, looking round on the beautiful and wealthy island, as a most

desirable prize, and resolving to seize it on the first opportunity. This man, one of the bloodiest tyrants in history, was,—so much for his blood,—a bastard, the son of one Harlotta, a tanner's daughter, of the town of Falaize, whence, it is said, comes our word, harlot. Determined to possess himself of England, by hook or by crook, he asserted that Edward the Confessor had made him his heir by will. Such will, however, he never produced on any occasion. It was, there is little question, an utter falsehood to begin with. The next step was by treachery. He seized on Harold, the son of the great Saxon Earl Godwin, who was the probable successor to the throne; for though standing only as brother-in-law to the king, he had the love of the people, and the real heir, Edgar the Atheling, was an imbecile. He compelled Harold, by a trick worthy of the man and the age, to swear to allow and to support his claims to the throne, on a concealed chest of dead men's bones, or, in other words, on the relics of saints, in which those barbarous times had wonderful faith. Having thus struck a superstitious terror into Harold's soul, his last step was force. On the death of the Confessor, he armed himself for invasion, and was clamorously supported by the whole hungry body of the nobility. It is curious and characteristic that, at a parliament composed of all classes of people—warriors, priests, merchants, farmers, and others—which he called together at Lillebonne, to grant him supplies for this great enterprise, the commons, who would have to pay for it, cried out vehemently against it, but their voice was overborne by the obstreperous soldiers and priests. These were mad with desire at once of plunder and revenge; for after William's visit to England, they had accumulated there in such swarms, and had grown to such a nuisance, that the whole people rose with one accord, under the great Earl Godwin, and chased them from the land. The greatest offenders, indeed, Robert, archbishop of Canterbury, and William, bishop of London, fled with the wildest precipitancy, arming their retainers, and fighting their way loaded with spoils, to the coast. Others took refuge in castles and fortresses which were commanded by their countrymen; but the Wittenagemot, or Parliament, met, with Godwin at their head, and pronounced a judgment of outlawry against the whole brood of Normans and French, so that they were speedily expelled or destroyed.

On fire with the remembrance of their ignominious expulsion, they crowded to William's standard like wolves at the call of winter; but they were not altogether sufficient for his mighty enterprise. The ambitious William, says Thierry,* looked far

* Histoire de la Conquête de l'Angleterre.

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beyond the confines of Normandy for soldiers of fortune to assist him in his great attempt. He had his ban of war published in all the neighbouring countries; he offered good pay to every tall, robust man who would serve him with the lance, the sword, or the cross-bow. A multitude flocked to him from all parts, from far and near, from the north and the south. They came from Maine and Anjou, from Poitou and Bretagne; from the country of the French king and from Flanders; from Aquitaine and from Burgundy; from Piedmont, beyond the Alps, and from the banks of the Rhine. *Adventurers by profession, the idle, the dissipated, the profligate, the enfans perdus of Europe hurried at the summons.** Of these some were knights and chiefs in war, others simple foot soldiers; some demanded regular pay in money, others merely their passage across the channel, and all the booty they might take. Some demanded territory in England,—a domain, a castle, a town; while others, again, simply wished to receive a rich Saxon lady in marriage. All the wild wishes, all the pretensions of human avarice were awakened into activity. William repulsed no one, but promised and pleased all as far as he could."

While STRENGTH was thus preparing itself, CUNNING was not the less busy. Robert of Canterbury, who had been obliged so hastily to fly out of England for his life; Lanfranc, afterwards so famous as primate of England, and other priests, had been to Rome to procure the sanction of the Pope, and this great head of the House of Cunning, always ready to give away that which did not belong to him, gave him a bull to seize on England on condition that it should be held as a fief of the church. He sent the adventurers also a consecrated banner, and a ring, *said to contain a hair of St. Peter*. Thus armed with the powers of superstition, the priests everywhere preached up this great crusade against unhappy England, and thousands flocked from all quarters of Europe to the call.

Such was the first band of adventurers assembled to invade this country. These had, as we see, no claim to style themselves exclusively Normans, but were the sweeping and refuse of all Europe. But we shall presently find that even these were exchanged, such of them as did not fall in battle, for others of a still lower grade and character. Before, however, proceeding further, we must notice a remarkable fact, and that is, that the Conqueror, though pretending a will of the Confessor in his favour, did not come hither as one seeking his own, but in the old character of a Dane,

* Chronique de Normandie,

avowing himself and his countrymen as Danes, and that he was come, not only with the old object of the Danes, plunder, but to avenge the injuries of their forefathers, the Danes. This is the speech put by the "Chroniclers" into his mouth as he rode to the front of his army, and was about to commence the decisive battle of Hastings: "Make up your minds to fight valiantly, and slay your enemies. A great booty is before us; for if we conquer we shall all be rich. What I gain, you will gain; if I take this land you will have it in lots amongst you. Know ye, however, that I am not come hither solely to take what is my due, but also to avenge our whole nation for the felonies, perjuries, and treacheries of these English. *They massacred our kinsmen, the Danes*—men, women, and children, on the night of St. Bryce. They murdered the knights and good men who accompanied prince Alfred from Normandy, and made my cousin Alfred expire in tortures. Before you is the son of that Earl Godwin who was charged with these murders. Let us forward and punish him, with God to our aid!"

This is every way a most remarkable speech, and one which ought never to be forgotten by Englishmen. It proclaims to them, in most unequivocal language, that great truth which I shall have only too frequent occasion in the course of this volume to illustrate—that the aristocracy of England hold their property and privileges by the right of conquest, and that we, the people, are in fact to this day the slaves not only of conquest, but of a *Danish conquest*. The battle of Hastings was in truth but the final and successful close of those many efforts of the Danes, through whole ages, in which they were repeatedly repulsed, but from which they never desisted, to make themselves masters of this island. Their conduct agreed with their characters. The moment they set foot in the country, they resumed the old Danish ravages,—pillaging, burning, and destroying. They overrun the country on all sides of their landing-place, plundered and slaughtered the people, and ransacked the churches. After the battle of Hastings, in which the brave Harold was unfortunately slain, and the only effective leader of the English thus lost to them, the Conqueror continued his route; not like one come to enter on a possession, but like his "kinsmen, the Danes," making his way with the most horrible devastations and carnage. He massacred the inhabitants of Romney and burned their houses; set fire to Dover; appeared before London; but not being able at once to take it, burned down Southwark, and went away through Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, and Berkshire, with his army, burning and destroying the helpless and innocent people like a very devil. From

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Hertfordshire he went towards London again, burning and massacring the population, and plundering as before.*

There is nothing in the history of the world more atrocious than the career of this Frenchified Dane, this bastard of pure blood. Even his coronation was a scene of horror and carnage. When a shout was made in Westminster Abbey as the crown was about to be put upon his head, his soldiers without, suspecting some treachery, instantly set fire to the houses around. There arose a dreadful scene of massacre and plunder, the rapacious soldiers of the Conqueror, says the historian, giving but slight proofs of that superiority in civilisation which has so generally been challenged for the Normans.†

The Conqueror was no sooner crowned than he began to put in action his great plan, that of parcelling out, as he had promised, the country to his followers. For this purpose, he for awhile pretended great mildness towards the English, and declared that he would rule them with more indulgence and mercy than any of their former kings had done. By this means he disarmed the fears of the people; many of their great lords came in and swore allegiance, instead of banding against him; and he employed this time in building fortresses, and making his position strong. His greedy followers, who did not enter into his far-stretching plots, were clamorous for immediate possessions. A huge army of monks and priests had flocked over after the army of conquest, and devoured him with demands for lands, abbeys, churches, and dignities. The artful Norman gratified them so far as to move the indignation of the ravaged people, and put them into a temper for an outbreak which might furnish them with an excuse for that wholesale and universal devastation and robbery which he planned. Having taken this step, he then withdrew to Normandy, there to show to his subjects the heaps of wealth which he and his followers had gathered in England; and taking along with him the most eminent of the English princes and nobles, to gratify the pride of himself and nation with seeing them in a sort of splendid captivity in his train. Part of the affluent spoil, together with the banner of Harold taken in the battle of Hastings, he sent to the Pope, whose spiritual arms had so much contributed to his success; and a vast amount of other riches was distributed amongst the monasteries and churches.

This was sufficient to spread the fire of emulation through the whole of the Continent, and insure him as great a crop of adventurers as the measures which he contemplated might demand.

* Roger Hoveden, *Saxon Chronicle*.

† Ordericus Vitalis; *Saxon Chron.*; William of Newbury; Gull. Pictav.

In the mean time he had not merely withdrawn as it were to lure the unwary English into the temptation to revolt, but he had left behind him his half-brother, Odo, bishop of Bayeaux, whom he made Earl of Hereford, a warrior-priest of a particularly haughty and unscrupulous character, as his viceroy, with a number of his barons as a council. These men, who, according to the Conqueror's plan, were to vex and insult the people to the pitch of desperation, seem to have done their work very effectually. They fleeced the natives without mercy. Their soldiers ranged far and wide, committing, without any restraint or check from their superiors, the most unheard-of outrages. They plundered the houses of all classes, high and low, and offered the grossest insults to the women. The sufferers cried for help and justice in vain, till, growing desperate, they formed conspiracies, and rose in vengeance in various parts on their oppressors. The Normans became dreadfully alarmed, and sent the most urgent entreaties to William to return. But the wily Conqueror lay still. He knew that he had with him all the English leaders who could alone enable the people to make successful head against him, and his cue was to allow the insurrections to become rife and general enough to afford a plea for that ample vengeance that he wished to take. That once arrived at, he passed over again to England, and soon commenced the general war of extermination and confiscation against his English subjects, which enabled him to make himself literally the conqueror of every yard of British ground, and to parcel it out amongst his Norman followers.

To trace at length this war of extermination would be to write a volume of the most unmitigated horrors which ever blackened the page of history. The spirit of the English rose with its ancient valour against their ruthless oppressors, and it required seven years of the most determined and bloody executions to crush them to passive obedience. To every quarter of the island he had successively to march his fierce army, and wherever he came he made a wilderness of the country. In the west of England, in Wales, and on the east coast, where the brave Saxon Hereward, lord of Born, made a gallant resistance till he was betrayed by the monks of Ely, William left lasting traces of his desolating campaigns. But it was in the north of England, especially in Yorkshire, Durham, and Northumberland, that the most dreadful tempest of his fury fell. Thrice he traversed these regions with fire and sword, and once more committed them to the tender mercies of his brother Bishop Odo.

The descriptions of this laying waste of the north of England by all the old chroniclers, Norman and French as well as English, are most horrifying, at the same time that there is nothing in

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history more thoroughly proved. The Conqueror is said to have been hunting in the forest of Dean when news of disturbances in the north was brought to him, and on which he swore by the splendour of the Almighty, that he would exterminate the whole of the Northumbrians, and never lay his lance in rest till he had done the deed. The implacably Danish and savage nature of his mind is shown in this, that though it required time to march northward, and to put down all the disaffected people, he never departed from his diabolical purpose, but after he had enforced submission, he sent out his whole army in exterminating columns to scour the whole country, and destroy man and beast, town and tower, before them. This army of human fiends, of what an old Norman calls a host of "Normans, Burgolouns, thieves, and felons," went on in a fury of carnage over all Northumberland, burning towns, villages, houses, and crops, and slaying men, women, children, and cattle, with indiscriminate rage. Monasteries and churches were laid in ashes; amongst them Jarrow, famous as the former residence of the venerable Bede. The monks and clergy of Durham fled for security to Holy Island. When the rumour of this terrible work of destruction spread, the minds of men were stunned as it were with the horror of it. From Durham to York, a space of sixty miles, the whole country was so thoroughly desolated that not an inhabited village remained, and William of Malmesbury, who wrote eighty years after this period, says, that fire and slaughter had made a vast wilderness there which remained to that day. From Durham north to Hexham, from the Wear to the Tyne, the remorseless Conqueror continued the same infernal process. Orderic Vitalis describes the "*feralis occisio*," the dismal slaughter, and says that more than a hundred thousand victims perished. "It was a horrible spectacle," says Roger Hoveden, "to see on the high roads and public places, and at the doors of houses, human bodies eaten by the worms, for there remained no one to cover them with a little earth." To use the words of modern historians,* "the fields in culture were burned, and the cattle and the corn in the barns carried off by the conquerors, who made a famine where they could not maintain themselves by the sword. This frightful scourge was felt in those parts, in the months that followed, with a severity never before experienced in England. After eating the flesh of dead horses which the Normans left behind them, the people of Yorkshire and Northumberland, driven to the last extremity, are said to have made many a loathsome repast on human flesh.† Pestilence followed

* Craike and Macfarland's Hist. of England.

† Florent. Wigorn.

in the wake of famine, and as a completion to this picture of horror, we are informed that some of the English, to escape death by hunger, sold themselves, with their wives and children, as slaves to the Norman soldiery, who were well provided in their citadels and castles with corn and provisions purchased on the continent with gold and goods robbed from the English."

But what William did here for vengeance he could do even for the sake of his amusement. The account of his creation of his New Forest in Hampshire is almost equally revolting. Here he depopulated a whole country, and burned down the houses and farms of the innocent people to create a forest. The tract of country included in this hunting-ground was not less than ninety miles in circumference, and contained, according to his own Doomsday-book, a hundred and eight places, manors, villages, or hamlets, which were laid waste. Six and thirty parish churches were destroyed, and the people driven out without any compensation. For the wanton guilt of his deeds here, the people attributed it as a judgment of heaven, that no less than three of his family were slain in this very forest, amongst them his son and successor, Rufus. Tradition, both here and in the north, has preserved amongst the people the dark fame of these horrors: in Yorkshire are yet said to be found on heaths and in woods which have never again been brought into cultivation, traces of the plough, and these are supposed to mark some of the lands at this time laid waste.

The ruthless Conqueror now divided the whole country amongst his equally ruthless Norman followers. All lands gradually passed by confiscation into their possession; and thus did the aristocracy of England acquire the bulk of the lands of the nation, which by the laws of primogeniture, and similar provisos, have been confined in their class, till their worth, advancing with the wealth and civilisation of the people, have enslaved the nation, and robbed the third estate of its share of the constitution.

He seized also the treasures of the Saxons which they had deposited for safety in religious houses, on the pretext that they belonged to disaffected and rebellious subjects. His commissioners, say the chroniclers, "who did their work hand in hand, were not even particular to make a distinction between such property and that which actually belonged to the churches themselves. They carried off too all title-deeds, charters, and the documents." To such an extent was this system carried, that Holinshed tells us, there came at last to be "neither governor, bishop, nor abbot of the English nation." To his more able, or more unprincipled followers,—to those in fact, who had done this devil's work for him,—his liberality was as bound-

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less as his vengeance had been to the poor English. To one William de Garenne he gave in the wasted north twenty-eight villages; to William de Percy, more than eighty manors. The English were thrust down, or compelled to sell themselves into slavery. The state to which he reduced this country is vividly described by Holinshed. "He nothing regarded the English nobility. They did now see themselves trodden under foot, to be despised, and to be mocked on all sides, insomuch that many of them were constrained, as it were, for a further testimony of servitude and bondage, to shave their beards, to cut their hair, and to frame themselves, as well in apparel as in service and diet at their tables, after the Norman manner, very strange, and far differing from the ancient customs and old usages of their country. Others, utterly refusing to sustain such an intolerable yoke of thralldom as was daily laid upon them by the Normans, chose rather to leave all, both goods and lands, and after the manner of outlaws, get them to the woods with their wives, children, and servants, meaning from thenceforth to live upon the spoil of the country adjoining, and to take whatever came to hand. Whereupon it came to pass, within a while, that no man might tread in safety from his own house or town to his next neighbour; and every quiet and honest man's house became, as it were, a hold and fortress, furnished for defence with bows and arrows, bills; pole-axes, swords, clubs and staves, and other weapons; the doors being kept locked and strongly bolted in the night season, as it had been in time of war, and amongst public enemies. Prayers were said also by the master of the house, as though they had been in the midst of the seas in some stormy tempest; and when the windows and doors should be shut in and closed, they used to say *Benedicite*, and others to answer *Dominus*, in like manner as the priest and his penitent were wont to do at confession in the church."

Such were the dreadful atrocities committed by this bastard Dane; such the dreadful condition to which he reduced the country; and when we bear in mind that the whole of this was wanton, or rather diabolically perpetrated cruelty, and that it was perfectly unnecessary, the people, as they had shown, being quite willing to submit themselves to kind treatment, an honest man would as soon claim descent from the devil as from this arch-villain. But then, there were the other hungry villains who conquered for him, and did this fiend's work for him, that must be satisfied; and when we thus behold the oceans of innocent blood, and the horrible crimes that these Franco-Danish wretches waded through, we come to a pretty good conception of the

perverted ideas of ancestry, and of every principle of honour, that can lead our aristocracy to pride themselves on such a descent.

But, as I have said, these marauders had not even the paltry distinction of being true Normans, or of the first great horde which effected the conquest. We find from his own secretary, Orderic Vitalis, that, after his desolation of the north of England, great numbers of his chiefs, at once weary with his continual demands on their exertions in slaughtering and destroying, and glutted with spoil beyond their utmost expectation, preferred returning to enjoy it in their own country in security, to having to defend it everlastingly here from the attacks of the outlawed, or yet unsubdued English. William was highly enraged at this desertion. He denounced these fugitives as cowards; he offered yet greater plunder to them to tempt their stay, but in vain; numbers hastened away to Normandy, amongst them Hugh de Grantmesnil, his own brother-in-law, whom he had created Earl of Norfolk, Humphrey Tilleuil, warden of Hastings Castle, and others on whom he had heaped honours and wealth without bounds. He confiscated again the estates which he had granted to such men in this country, and again published his brilliant offers of honours and of plunder, to the adventurers of Europe; and these flocked over to him in swarms from all quarters of France, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

In the reign of Rufus, other causes thinned out this original Norman stock, without introducing others. These men, having estates both in Normandy and England, were beside themselves at seeing one territory under Robert, the elder brother, and the other under William. They saw that they could not long hold these estates in both countries, if these countries became entirely separated. They therefore never rested till they had roused a war between the two brothers, in which some took the side of Robert, some of William. William prevailed, and all those barons who had opposed him fled, and their estates were confiscated.* After that, a great conspiracy broke out against him amongst those barons who remained, at the head of which was Robert Mowbray, Earl of Northumberland, on whom had been bestowed no less than two hundred and eighty manors. In this conspiracy were found engaged numbers of the most wealthy and powerful of his Norman nobles, as William, Count of Eu, his own relation; William of Alderic, his godfather; Hugh, Earl of Shrewsbury; Odo, Earl of Holderness; and Walter de Lacy. These, according to the old chroniclers, were defeated

* Saxon Chronic.; Order. Vital.; Ingulph.; Malmesbury, &c.

and destroyed in various ways, or escaped in troops to the continent, and their estates here were confiscated. In the course of these transactions, vast numbers of these insurgent Normans fell in the field. Their treachery had compelled Rufus to lean for security on the English, and they well supported him.

On his death, his younger brother Henry, surnamed Beauclerc, who had again usurped the government from his elder brother, the easy, good-natured Robert, pursued the same policy, and this caused a still greater clearing out of the first race of Normans. Professing great regard for morals and decency, he drove out of the country the dissolute companions of Rufus. He pursued to the death, or out of the kingdom, all the barons who had asserted the cause of Robert of Normandy, amongst them the Earls of Surrey, Shrewsbury, and Lancaster, till, says the historian, "one by one, nearly all the great nobles, the sons of the men who had achieved the conquest of England, were driven out of the land as traitors and outlaws, and their estates and honours were given to new men,—to the obscure followers of the new court."*

What now becomes of all the boasts of high blood? of descent from those victorious Normans who won England at Hastings? Here we have the clear declaration of history that these, and the sons of these, had either gone out, or were driven out till scarcely one of them remained. But if the proud blood of the present day be not descended from these first conquerors, as it appears evident enough that it is not, there is every reason to believe that it is descended from a much meaner but equally rapacious brood—thieves, parasites, low adventurers, and ruffians of all descriptions, which continued, at all possible opportunities, to stream over from the Continent for ages, and to slip into the service and the favouritism of a succession of the worst monarchs that ever sate on any throne. We find these muddy inundations on almost every page of our early history.

During the civil wars of Stephen and Matilda, swarms of these vile mercenaries had insinuated themselves; had seized on castles and lands; had become such intolerable nuisances that a cotemporary writer† notes the exultation which the people displayed when Henry II. ordered them to quit the kingdom in one day. "We saw these Brabançons and Flemings cross the sea to return to the plough-tail, and become serfs after having been lords." But though on this occasion a pretty good batch of these animals

* Orderic Vitalis.; Sax. Chron.; Macfarlane's Hist. of England.

† R. de Diceto.

was got rid of, the process of their insinuation was continually going on. In the disordered reign of Richard Cœur de Lion, and still more so in that of the detestable John, they swarmed like beasts over the devoted island. Especially after the barons had compelled John to sign the Charter, did he send out and collect to his standard troops of such adventurers from France and Flanders. At the head of a host of these base fellows, Poictavins, Gascons, Flemings, Brabanters, &c., did this vile king traverse his kingdom, now here, now there, like a fury or a murderer, burning, destroying, and plundering, as if in a foreign country which he doomed to destruction. The very names of his leaders and companions strike one with horror. "Falco without Bowels;" "Manleon, the Bloody;" "Walter Buch, the Murderer;" "Sottim, the Merciless;" and "Godeschal, the Iron-hearted." To such men were his subjects given up, who tortured them to make them show where they had concealed their property, burned down their villages and towns, and the horrid monarch himself often setting them example by burning the house where he had lodged with his own hands, when he quitted it the next morning. Yet to these fellows did he give the towns and lands of such nobles as they destroyed, and they became part of the aristocracy, and transmitters of the proud blood of the English nobility.

To rid themselves of this nuisance, the barons in opposition to John committed a worse error, and created a nuisance still greater. They invited over Louis, the son of the French king, offering him the crown, and thus was the kingdom put in danger of becoming a province of France; and the strange spectacle was beheld of a French prince and army fighting on the fair soil of England. Happily, in the following reign, Louis was compelled to retire; but in the mean time many of his followers had got possession of castles and lands, and also became part and parcel of the aristocracy of England, and the progenitors of pure blood. Again, the great evil of the reign of the weak Henry III. was the inviting in and employment of these foreign adventurers. This was the perpetual source of his quarrels with the elder barons. At one time Hugh de Burgh succeeded in taking Bedford Castle, and hanging eighty of these foreigners, knights and others, who had been guilty of the greatest excesses. But still later we read that Peter des Roches, a Poictavin, bishop of Winchester, taught the king to detest the older race of barons, to undermine Magna Charta, and to rely on foreigners, with whom he filled up every office in the court, the church, the army, and government. These hungry knaves, Poictavins, Gascons, and

French of every description, revelled in the national revenues, grasped at estates, and insulted the people in the most audacious manner.*

Such is the state of things down to the year 1270, and we might pursue the matter further; but here is surely enough to demonstrate in what manner the oldest and best blood of English aristocracy has been compounded. It is the product of successive herds of the most miscellaneous and most bloody-minded adventurers which ever disgraced history.

Such was the Norman Conquest, achieved in robbery, rapine, and every crime at which humanity shudders, and succeeded by men and scenes equally revolting. Such was the monarch, and such the followers, who laid the foundations of the Norman power, and built up the fabric of pure blood in England. It is difficult to say which are the more revolting subjects of contemplation, the bastard king who led the way, the ready tools who deluged a whole land with innocent blood at his command, or the reptile swarms who, in the following age, stole in after them to deeds and usurpations equally detestable. Let the English people, when they hear of high blood, recollect the innocent blood of their fathers on which it fattened, and the spawn of miscellaneous, nameless, and lawless adventurers, from whom it really flows.

CHAPTER III.

"Not all the gentle blood of all the Howards
Can e'er ennoble fools, or knaves, or cowards."—POPE.

In our last chapter we have made an analysis of the famous Norman Conquest and conquerors, which is by no means flattering to what is called good blood; but before proceeding with our theme, we must pause a moment to give another glance at this thing entitled high descent—at this pride of ancestry. We will take up the subject here, for an instant, that we may contemplate it with all its advantages, that is, at its fountain-head, as it relates to this country, and in its highest pride of place.

It is an old saying that it is a wise child that knows its own father. We may rather call that a happy child that scarcely can tell who his own father is. So far from regarding a clearly trace-

* Math. Paris; Wykes; Rymer; Holinshed; Matt. Westminster, &c.

able descent as a blessing, we look upon it as one of the greatest curses. What a throng of fools, villains, and spotted characters is heaped on that devoted head, which can count up a long string of ancestors! What a real blessing it would be not even to have known one's own grandfather! for then all the horrors and shames of the past are buried in oblivion, and no one could upbraid us with the crimes of our ancestry. To take the highest family in these kingdoms for an example—Who would have dared to tell our present amiable queen, if history had not preserved the names and deeds of her forefathers, what a race she is sprung from? What mad head would have dared to assert that her family annals present such a precious set of thieves, murderers—ay, murderers of their own kith and kin, quarrelsome savages, unnatural monsters, smotherers of innocent children, tearers out of eyes, burners of people alive, killers of wives, and perpetrators of offences that cannot be named; a catalogue of characters so leprous with crime and disreputable, that no honest sweep would care to own kinship with them? But history and a thousand pens have blazoned this everlastingly abroad, and has thereby, if we will but look sensibly at it, for ever unweaved all the mischievous mystery and proud pretences of pure blood; and satisfied us that if any man has an advantage in this respect, it is he who possesses the benefit of want of evidence against him, and, be his blood what it may, can boldly say—"Let him who can charge my ancestors with wrong, do it; but I myself can charge the ancestors of the highest boasters of high blood with crimes which ought to have been visited by the hangman or the axe."

We do not mean to assert this melancholy truth, and one which, for the happiness and dignity of humanity, has been too much overlooked, as affecting only our royal race, but as affecting all royal and all noble races (so called) whatever. You have only to look through the most authentic records of any nation, or of any family, to convince yourself that there is not a descent of a thousand, no, nor one of five hundred years, which is not crowded with such a throng of cruel, bloody, unprincipled, unnatural, murderous, covetous, lustful, traitorous, and godless monsters, as put the bare fiction of pure blood to the utmost shame, and teach us that it is not in the past that we are to seek for the honour of ourselves or human nature, but in the present. It is not from savage and ignorant antiquity, but from the civilised and christianised present, that we must win genuine distinction, if we are to have it: it is not from others, but from ourselves. The course of true glory, like the course of population and refinement, turns not backward on the rising, but towards the setting sun. It travels not eastward, but westward.

It rises not out of the blood-bedimmed shadows of the bygone; but travels onward into futurity, clad in christian knowledge, and filled with christian love, to establish, in deeds of true daring for general liberty, and in works of beneficence to our kind, the glory of true family renown. It is in personal merit that the genuine personal distinction lies. He who works God-like works for his brethren and his age; purifies his own blood beyond all the factitious quackery of heralds, and the lies of fashion; he makes it a foundation of honour to himself and his children, if they follow in his steps;—of shame to them, if they depart from them. He, and he alone, is the Noble. He alone carries God's patent in his hand, the star of unflecked honour in his heart; and all besides, number they ancestors by thousands, are but wretched impostors, and presumers on a lie.

To see with what a shameless front we have been imposed on by heralds and by aristocratic pride and self-interest, let us now take our proposed view of this royal Norman family which is the fountain of all aristocratic honour in this country. What the tools were with which they worked, and whom our aristocrats claim as their progenitors we have already seen.

The Conqueror himself, then, as we have observed, was the bastard of a tanner's daughter:—a strange fountain of ancestral glory! Who is, indeed, to assure us that he was the son of the Duke of Normandy at all?—that this Harlotta, the tanner's daughter, had not, as many of her tribe have done since, fathered the child where she saw the greatest hope of benefit and honour? Who shall guarantee us that the Conqueror was not altogether the plebeian offspring of plebeian parents? Be that as it may, it had been well if this was the worst thing about him. Had he proved himself a just and good man, his birth would have signified nothing. He would have been just as well the son of Gaston, the tanner's apprentice, as of a duke. No man is accountable for his origin, which is not within his own power or volition; nor properly an object of honour or dishonour on that account. As we have remarked, a man must make himself his own fountain of honour. He can no more wrap himself in the glory of his ancestors than he can in the sunbeams of yesterday's sun, which departed with the sun itself. The sun sets, and our forefathers set, and they carry remorselessly and irresistibly their own light of glory with them. If we will not create light for ourselves in the night of our earthly sojourn, we must walk in darkness. What we merely mean to point out, in referring to William's birth, is the singular inconsistency with which the sticklers for pure blood leap over such plebeian blotches. But the pure blood is at every step found to be full of these damning impurities, and

William's birth was the least objectionable thing about him. He was a hard, merciless, and monstrous man. Before he came into this country he was already blackened with the charge of murder. Conan, the reigning Duke of Brittany, had demanded that William should, as he was intending to take possession of England, restore to him Normandy, which he claimed in right of ancestry. Conan speedily was taken off by poison; and the universal belief of that age, and especially of Brittany, was, that William was the guilty instigator of the deed.

His proceedings in this country we have already seen: the cool plan and purpose with which he massacred almost a whole people who showed every disposition to submit to him if he would rule them mildly. Such was his heartless rigour that even his own vulture followers were at length disgusted with it, and many of them joined with the oppressed English in a conspiracy against him, at the famous wedding of Norwich, of the Earl of Norfolk with Emma, the sister of Fitzosborn, the Earl of Hereford; where this grand conspiracy showed itself under these Earls of Norfolk and Hereford, and all parties joined in a general curse against the Conqueror. "He is a bastard, a man of base extraction," said the Normans. "It is in vain he calls himself a king; it is easy to see he was never made to be one; and God has him not in his grace." "He poisoned our Conan, that brave Count of Brittany," cried the Bretons. "He has invaded our noble kingdom, and massacred the legitimate heirs to it, or driven them into exile," cried the English. The guests shouted tumultuously that all this was true; that William the Bastard was detested by all men, and that his death would gladden the hearts of thousands.*

In the affections of his own family William was not more happy than in those of his people. He was obliged to arrest his turbulent half-brother Odo, and imprison him during the remainder of his reign. His eldest son, Robert, was almost continually in rebellion against him for possession of Normandy, and showed more disposition for a dissolute life, and for the company of guzzlers, jugglers, dancers, lewd women, and gamblers, than for any rational pursuit. His second son, Richard, was gored to death with a stag in the New Forest, where afterwards a son of Robert also was killed, and his third son, William Rufus,—a judgment, as the people believed, from God for his atrocities there. His latter days were embittered by the wranglings and jealousies of his two youngest sons, William and Henry, which showed him horrors in perspective: and in his last moments

* Will. Malmesbury; Orderic Vital: Matt. Paris.

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these sons forsook him, as did all his followers, to secure what he had left. "Barons, priests, and dukes," says his own secretary, "mounted their horses and away almost before he was dead, to serve their interests with the living. The minor attendants rifled the apartments, and even carried off the royal clothes; and the body was left almost naked on the bare boards for a whole day."

This is a melancholy unveiling of the motives which keep up the farce of royal state. But this was often the case in this family. Rufus was left in the forest where he fell till an old charcoal-burner picked up his body, and carried it, like the carcass of a beast, in his cart to Winchester. There, the next day, the body, all covered with blood and dirt, and still lying in the man's cart, was carried to the cathedral, and buried. Henry II. suffered similar neglect at Chinon, where he died. The desertion of nobles and attendants which occurred to his great-grandfather, the Conqueror, was acted again; so that it was with difficulty that anybody could be found to wrap his body in a winding-sheet, and carry it to Fontevraud for burial.

The character of Rufus, as drawn by the old chroniclers, is that of rapacity and the most infamous dissoluteness, which spread through his whole court. He was at war, first with one brother and then with another. Henry Beauclerc, his successor, was a man of the most cold and unprincipled cunning. A more striking proof of this could not be given than that he not only usurped the rights of his elder brother, Robert, and making him prisoner, confined him for life, but destroyed his eyes with the application of a basin of red-hot metal. What puts the crown to this diabolical deed is, that this same good-natured Robert had, on one occasion, when Rufus and he were in arms against this Henry, and had shut him up in the castle of Mount St. Michael, in Normandy, refused to suffer him to die of hunger, as Rufus would have done, but sent him wine and food, saying,—"Where shall we find another brother when he is gone?" Scarcely less horrible was his allowing the eyes of two of his grand-daughters to be put out, and their noses to be cut off by one of his own officers, for which their mother, his own daughter, attempted to murder him. Well has the family of the savage Conqueror been styled the family of Atreus and Thyestes. There seemed scarcely to be a spark of natural feeling, much less of natural affection, in it.

But Henry did not merely imprison and blind his brother Robert;—he sought to murder Robert's only son and heir, William, and never ceased persecuting him till he compassed his destruction. It was on his return from one of his wars against this

nephew, that he lost *his* only legitimate son, William, who was drowned on the passage. The king had a vast train of mistresses and illegitimate children in the fleet with him, but this stayed behind to riot, and was wrecked, to the great joy of England, whose people he had vowed to yoke in ploughs when he came to the throne, and treat as beasts of burden. He was of singularly dissolute character. The character of Henry himself has been summed up in few words. Henry of Huntingdon, who knew him well, calls him the murderer of many men; the violator of his oaths; and one of those princes who cause royalty to be considered a crime. He was an able and a learned man for his time, but was a consummate monster of craft and treachery; implacable in his revenge; and is denounced by his contemporaries for his covetousness, cruelty, and lust. His daughter, Matilda, who was first married to Henry V., emperor of Germany, and thence called the Empress Matilda, was afterwards married to Geoffrey Plantagenet, Earl of Anjou, and thus became the mother of the line of the Plantagenets. This woman was as cruel, perfidious, and unprincipled as her father; a termagant in her family, the plague of her husband, and so insolent towards the people, that the Londoners stormed her palace while she was at dinner, and chased her away for ever. During nearly the whole reign of her cousin Stephen, she contended with him for the crown; and though Stephen was a much better and more humane man than his family usually produced, between them they contrived to reduce the nation to the most deplorable condition. The rapacious nobles saw in their dissensions their own advantage. They could seize on what they pleased. They obtained permission to fortify their castles, and thus, says the historian, "all those castles became dens of thieves and cut-throats." * The most disgraceful profligacy prevailed; all sense of right was mocked, and the revolting spectacle was seen of the king's own brother, the Bishop of Winchester, sometimes cursing him, and declaring him an usurper; and again, sometimes cursing Matilda, and declaring his brother to be the rightful sovereign. "All England," says a contemporary, † "wore a face of woe and desolation. Multitudes abandoned their beloved country to wander in a foreign land; others, forsaking their houses, built wretched huts in the churchyard, hoping that the sacredness of the place would afford them some protection." "So horrible were the sufferings of the people," says the Saxon chronicler, "that if they saw two or three men on horseback approach a village, they fled to conceal themselves; and seeing that every crime and cruelty went

* Henry of Huntingdon.

† Gesta Stephani.

on with apparent impunity, they accused heaven, and declared that Christ and his saints had fallen asleep."

Henry the Plantagenet, as if bringing in better blood from a new stock, was by far the best monarch of his family. He was brave, wise, and merciful. He added Ireland and a great part of France to his kingdom, and would undoubtedly have made his people much happier than they had been since the Conquest, but for the unnatural Norman spirit which broke out again in his family. He himself was not without the furious passions which he inherited from his mother; and in the paroxysms of his rage was terrible. He was then, say the chroniclers, more like a wild beast than a man. His eyes were bloodshot, his face like fire, his tongue abusive and blasphemous; his hands most mischievous, striking and tearing whatever came in his way. On one occasion he flew at a page to tear out his eyes; and the boy did not escape without some ugly scratches.* But in the dispositions and doings of his wife and his sons, he had enough to convert a saint into a fury. From interested motives, he had married an imperious and bad woman,—Eleanor of Aquitaine, a convicted adulteress, and thence divorced from her former husband, the king of France; and he paid the penalty of his deed. His sons were the most ungracious and rebellious brood that ever gnawed at a father's heart. Urged by their turbulent and infamous mother, they were continually in arms against their father; and though his strong hand made them succumb, they managed to involve his whole reign and kingdom in blood, and to bring him with sorrow to the grave. One of these sons died before him, bitterly bewailing his unnatural conduct. Richard became the Lion-heart of history,—a man celebrated by poets and romancers for his valour; but, in truth, a bad man, and a bad king. He may be termed the Achilles of the middle ages; of gigantic strength and bravery; delighting in war; bloody, and unprincipled in his exactions from his people for the purposes of his military ambition; swearing that he would sell London if he could, and brutally maltreating the Jews to extort their wealth, he left the nation to the mercy of fierce barons, and his heartless brother, John.

This John crowned all the villany and crimes of his family, and became the most contemptible and diabolical scoundrel that ever wore a crown. There is no portion of his life which is not covered with infamy. Treachery and rebellion to his father; treachery and rebellion against his brother and king; stirring up foreign powers and assassins against him, marked his earlier progress; and the character thus acquired was amply maintained by

* Epist. St. Thom.; Giraldus Cambrensis, &c. &c.

becoming the undoubted murderer of his nephew, the Prince Arthur of Brittany, the orphan son of his elder brother, Geoffrey, and true heir to the crown, who there is every reason to believe, perished by his own hands. Shakspeare has stirred the blood of ages against him, by his description of the burning out of the eyes of this orphan and unprotected youth : but not even the powers of that marvellous dramatist, could add an atom to that load of contempt and indignation which his own and succeeding times heaped on the head of this royal monster. There is no crime against heaven or humanity of which he was not capable, or of which he was not accused. He scorned all the bonds of family honour and affection ; he defied and outraged all those of social life and of government. He led amongst the most infamous companions the most infamous existence. He defied his nobles, and trampled on their privileges. He stripped his subjects with a robber's hand, and let loose on them the most diabolical horde of wretches that ever afflicted this much-enduring nation. He gratified his lust by tearing wives from their husbands ; and, as we have seen, when the barons and people attempted to bind him by the Charta, he marched from place to place, all over the kingdom, with men whose very names are a horror ; and, to the very day of his ignominious death, carried through this devoted realm, fire, murder, anarchy, and desolation.

The light, or rather darkness, in which the historians of the time represent this crowned monster, and the condition to which he reduced this fair island, are equally abhorrent. We behold him either passing his time in singing, dancing, and carouse, in the midst of lewd women and effeminate courtiers ; while his enemies were seizing his dominions abroad, and his barons his lands and castles at home, or ramping through the kingdom like a fiend. Now he is rolling on the floor because compelled to sign Magna Charta, foaming at the mouth, and chewing sticks and straws ; and now he is the victim of rage and gluttony, on his death-bed, having lost his crown, his treasures, the hearts of all his people, and every foot of those foreign territories which had cost the nation so much blood and money in the reigns of his fathers. The condition in which he left the kingdom was that of general ruin. The people were burnt and hunted out of house and home. The castles were full of lawless foreigners ; the roads and woods of robbers. There was no security, no comfort, no trade remaining.

Here we may close our brief review of the family and immediate descendants of the Conqueror. A more melancholy survey, or one less likely to impress us with reverence for what has been termed high blood, we could not well have met with. Tyranny abroad, and the most shocking mutual hatred and dark crimes at

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home, are the repellant features of this unsavoury family. It may be said that those were barbarous times, and that this family did but partake of the traits common to semi-barbarous ages. But who, then, prides himself on descent from savages, and the monsters of savage ages?

But, in fact, this family, by the evidence of the historians of the time, was, amid all the barbarity of that period, pre-eminently savage and unnatural. Bad as the Conqueror's immediate family was, a fresh accession of horror seemed to come in with the Plantagenet line. Henry, as we have observed, was so much better, that he might seem to have been of better blood; yet such was the character of his family, that the people certainly believed it to be descended from the devil. They record the most horrible traditions of the whole Plantagenet race. The least revolting of these legends relates to an ancient Countess of Anjou, from whom King Henry himself descended. The husband of this dame, having remarked with fear and trembling that she rarely went to church, and, when she did, always withdrew before the celebration of mass, took it into his head one day to have her seized in church, and have her forcibly detained there for the whole service, by four strong squires. The strong men did as they were ordered; but at the moment of the consecration of the host, the countess, stripping off the mantle by which they held her, flew out of the window and was never seen again. Prince Richard, according to a French chronicler of the time, was wont to repeat this pretty tale of *diablerie*, and to say, that it was not astonishing that he and his brothers, issuing from such a stock, should be so fierce and lawless; adding, that it was quite natural that what came from the devil should return to the devil. What will our royal family think of this genealogy?*

The fact is, however, that if we look forward, the prospect is not much more cheering or attractive. An alternation of tyrants and imbeciles stretches on from John to George IV. The kings, till the time of Henry VII., were either fighting with each other for the crown, and rending the whole island to pieces with their sanguinary dissensions, or were wasting the strength and treasures of their people on the conquests of France and Scotland, which were again wholly wrested from them, so that in the end they had spent much and gained nothing but a great military fame. Able monarchs there were, indeed, amongst them, as any nation can boast. Such Englishmen must be, whether subjects or kings. Such were the first and third Edwards, and the fourth and fifth Henrys; but even these were ruthless kings; and the bloody tragedies of

* Script. Rer. Franc.

those days, which history presents on all its pages, frighten us from them, but pre-eminently from the murderous Richard III., and the equally murderous and lascivious Edward IV. Child-killers and drowners of brothers, they only gave way in Henry VIII. to the supremest monster of kingship, compounded of boundless lust and merciless murder of his wives—the Bluebeard of all history. Pass over the poor sickly youth, his son, who, though he died so early, and was praised so much for his piety, was a burner of martyrs, to bloody Mary; to Elizabeth, brave and man-hearted, but the murderess of her cousin, Mary of Scotland, and of many a sufferer at the burning stake. Then comes the fool James, and the decapitated tyrant Charles; then the Charles of lewd fame; then the chased-away tyrant, James II.; and from this point we may hasten over a train of stupid or mediocre princes to close the muster in the notorious George IV., the Caligula of modern times. If we except, amongst the better ones, Edward VI., Elizabeth, Mary, Anne, Williams III. and IV., and George III., what a catalogue of insignificants or of the worthless are the remainder! How vainly do we look through the vast period for one eminently great and glorious monarch—another Alfred the Great!

Let no one say that we seek to run down and degrade the monarchs of our native country. Heaven forbid! There is not an Englishman that we would willingly malign, be he man or monarch. Would to heaven, that we could conscientiously extol and magnify all our kings as a race of the wisest, purest, best, and most merciful princes in the world! But stern and incorruptible history stares us in the face; and no man in his senses is able to style them so. The English nation has grown and prospered by its wonderful and dauntless spirit; by its energies which no tyrant could bend, and no oppressions extinguish. It has risen and fought its way to freedom and knowledge, to magnificent greatness and high refinement. It has become the queen of nations and the glory of the world; but he that shall assert that its monarchs or its aristocracy have progressed in an equal ratio of ability, virtue, and genuine fame, declares himself equally ignorant of history and men.

But this is not the case merely with us. We make no exception of our peers and princes. Look abroad through all modern history, in all countries. Where are your Charlemagnes, your Alfreds, your Henry the Fourths of France, your Peters of Russia? They are the solitary lights in the dark waste of the years of government, while peoples and nations have been marching on their way to science, to knowledge, and pre-eminence. The grand truth to be drawn from this is, that the fiction of pure

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and high blood is the greatest of all possible fictions, and that if there be a stream of blood more particularly corrupted and made capable of base and ungenerous actions, it is that of the badged classes. For what is pure or high blood? That which leads to pure and high deeds! There is then not a bitterer sarcasm than to style princes and aristocrats of such blood. *That* we must seek in the veins of the enlighteners and benefactors of their kind—amongst the Shakespeares, Miltons, Bacons, Fénelons, Howards, Hofers, Gustavus Wasas, Washingtons, and Franklins of the earth: amongst the creators of art and the founders of beneficent institutions,—the good physicians, the poets, the patriots, the philosophers and Christian teachers of mankind. There flows the pure blood; there it bursts forth in blessings through the whole wilderness of society; helping us to pull down ancient oppressions; to seek and raise by knowledge and kindness the trodden down and forgotten; to beautify and to invigorate, as with the Spirit of God and of heaven, the walk and dwellings of our fellow-men.

CHAPTER IV.

“That old boast
Of blood, is but opinion's idle brag,
And nature knows no 'scutcheons.”

“ERNEST,” *an Epic Poem, reviewed by the Quarterly,
and afterwards suppressed by its Author.*

THE history of the growth and progress of our English aristocracy comprehends three great periods;—one from the Conquest to Henry VIII.; one during the dynasties of the Tudors and Stuarts; and the third from that epoch to the present time. In each of these periods they rose to their greatest height by a different system of tactics. Before, however, we proceed to trace their career through these their great eras, we must devote a few pages to an isolated fact,—the achievement of Magna Charta.

The winning and establishment of this great declaration of our rights, has always been claimed by the aristocracy, and conceded by historians; but it has been conceded in the very face of the facts which they themselves record. It has been made the occasion of heaping almost more incense on them than has their

pure blood. The Magna Charta extorted by the barons—the brave barons at Rannymede—has been the theme of perpetual encomiums. It is the one great national and patriotic deed in their history, and in fact is a deed glorious as that to be found on the pages of any history. But who won it? To whom is the honour due? To the barons, and the barons alone, of England? No! We must award the glory where it really of right belongs—TO THE WHOLE UNITED PEOPLE OF ENGLAND! That is the power which has actually worked out every great and glorious victory over external foes or internal oppressions in this country. That is the power to which the fame of English greatness belongs; and which, as we proceed, will be seen to be the mighty, restless, ever-ascending, ever-expanding, never-pausing, and never-tiring spirit, which has conquered nations, put down tyrants, founded constitutions, raised up arts, literature, philosophy, and the grand fabric of social strength, intelligence, and happiness, which are now the proud possessions and the proud attributes of the British people; and which is yet destined to achieve far more wonderful triumphs before the eyes of God and of the world.

Too long has this great power been defrauded of its just claim to the conquest of the Magna Charta. Scottish historians have not failed to claim merit for their own countrymen in aiding the great work; but, without denying that the descent which they made was very useful, the truth is, that the only real power by which that grand object was accomplished—the British people—has been passed over by all parties as if actually non-existent. To deprive the barons of their due share in the glorious achievement, is no object of mine. Would to God they had always been as honestly employed. But that this great blessing, won for them and the people, was won by them and the people, and could not have been won by them without the people, a few words will show. Great has been the laud heaped upon them for having, while working for themselves, also included generously the people in the momentous document. They who have thus bepraised them on this account, either purposed to deceive, or did not understand their own history. In the first place the benefits of the Charta became extended by the future growth, advancement in knowledge, and exertions of the people themselves, far beyond any intentions of the barons at the time. The great bulk of the people then were the VILLAINS, and the whole of the rights of this, the multitude, is but touched upon by one article of the Charta, the twentieth; and in what is made to consist their rights? That they shall not be unreasonably fined for a small offence, nor be deprived of the instruments of their husbandry!

The assistance of the FREEMEN, however, who now were become a considerable body, was absolutely necessary to the success of the attempt, and they were therefore included in the provisions of the Charta. The barons, who were seeking their own ends, and who in no age were very nice in the means by which they attained them, would have cared as little for the freemen as for the villains, if they could have done without them. As they could not, their rights must therefore be recognised. The base king had brought equal misery on all classes; all were embittered and hotly bent against him; and this union of the barons and the freemen promised victory over him. The rights of the freemen were, of course, recognised. "No freeman shall be arrested or imprisoned, or dispossessed of his tenement, or outlawed, or exiled, or in anywise proceeded against, unless by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land." (Article 39.) "Justice shall not be sold, refused, or delayed to any one." (Article 40.)

In these two sentences lie the whole liberties of the people of England. These were further confirmed and completed by the appointment of the judges and knights of assize, who were to go through the country quarterly; and by the provisions of the 40th article.

But did the freemen obtain these recognitions of their rights gratuitously, or from the generous magnanimity of the barons? No such thing! They were the price of their indispensable co-operation, and through them they were obtained for every man in England; for the villains gradually freed themselves, and thus stepped into all the privileges of these articles.

Whoever, therefore, sees the barons in book or picture, or his own imagination, standing at Runnymede, and conceives them to be there assembled as a great, independent, and, for their own purpose, all-sufficient power; whoever thus regards them as the suggestive and sole executive party in this great attempt to check the wantonness of royalty; and that they had in their own steel-clad arms the necessary vigour to compel the concession of their claims; conceives a fiction more empty and airy than a new year's dream.

The barons and the clergy stood there as the representatives of the nation, as our parliament-men stand as its representatives at this day. The clergy, who were the lawyers and the thinkers of the day, as the barons were the illiterate but able-bodied actors, were the framers of the Great Charter, and, besides that, they were a class springing in a great degree from the people, had rights and property equally to secure, and were too shrewd to omit the very

class out of which their body was continually recruiting itself, and without whom the barons might fight and threaten in vain.

They had indeed threatened and fought in vain before they came to Runnymede. They had been obliged to throw themselves on the people, and stood there, though not by formal election, by tacit consent, as their representatives. A few words will make this self-evident.

John, as we have seen, had by his weakness and wickedness, his tyranny and cruelty, filled the whole country with wretchedness, and with contempt and detestation of himself. All parties were eager to put a stop to his ruinous career; and the only means were to compel him to acknowledge the rights of the people, which had been recognised in the successive charters of Canute, Edward the Confessor, Henry I., Stephen, and Henry II. The charter demanded of John was but a revision or revival of these charters, for the first of which, indeed, we are indebted to Canute the Great. Nay, so far was Magna Charta from extending the liberty secured by these charters, that Lord Lyttleton declares the charter of Henry I., which was but a renewal of that of the Confessor, was more favourable to liberty in some respects, than Magna Charta itself. It was not that England did not possess a charter, but that John despised all charters and all laws, which rendered necessary the resistance of the barons.

They took arms. The crisis was favourable to them. John had been driven with infamy from all those possessions in France which his ancestors had won and held, with the expenditure of so much blood and treasure. The Pope had not only laid his kingdom under interdict, but had actually pronounced his deposition, and given his throne to the King of France. John had been compelled to make the most humiliating submission to the Pope's nuncio; he had joined in a confederation with the Flemish and Germans against France, and had reaped nothing again but disgrace and loss. He had returned home to wreak his blind fury of chagrin on his subjects. The church, which John had set at defiance, had roused the barons, as well as all his subjects against him. It had absolved them from their acts of allegiance; and Archbishop Langton, whom he had banished and grossly insulted, spurred the barons forward to take revenge for themselves and him. He was, in fact, the soul of the whole opposition. He it was that convoked the barons, and read to them the charter of Henry I., and called upon them to compel John to submit to a new and similar one. How often out of personal feelings does God work the work of nations and of ages! Langton was really the author and originator, and champion of the Great

Charter. Though the Pope had now taken off the interdict, and become the patron of John, because John had made over England for ever to the Church of Rome, yet Langton, in his own immitigable resentment, still pursued him. The barons, bold but illiterate men, were as wax in his hands. They had lately joined altogether in the infamous act of making over this country for ever to a foreign power—the Pope; and they were now as ready to join Langton in his determination to humble John. The Pope had now declared for him, but the people hated him. On the 20th of November, 1214, they assembled at St. Edmundsbury, that being the Saint's day, and swore on the high altar, that if the king refused the rights they claimed, they would make war on him. On the feast of Epiphany, they presented themselves before him in London, and made their demands. At Easter they met in arms at Stamford, followed by two thousand knights, and a host of retainers, and marching towards Oxford, where John lay, again demanded a charter. Not receiving a satisfactory answer, they proclaimed themselves the army of God and the Holy Church, and presented themselves before the castle of Northampton.

But it was no longer king or barons who could decide the fate of the nation. The people were already become of such importance, that the decision lay with them. John was the first in his meanness to appeal to them. Ruthlessly as he had fleeced them, he now courted and flattered them, and ordered all the freemen to assemble in his behalf against the rebellious barons. The barons assaulted the castle of Northampton, and could make no impression. After fifteen days they raised the siege, and retired to Bedford, dispirited and dejected. Their first martial enterprise was an utter failure. THEY SAW THAT WITHOUT THE PEOPLE THEY COULD DO NOTHING. The people had not yet declared themselves for either side; and for whichever party they *did* decide, there the victory would lie. But there could not long be any doubt which party the people of England would embrace—it would be that of liberty. The men of Bedford flung open their gates to the barons; and almost at the same moment the citizens of London declared for them too. The question was at once decided. The barons were filled with exultation; they marched rapidly to London, where they were received with open arms, and the tyrant quailed before this demonstration. He sent messengers promising to grant all just rights and liberties, and Runnymede was appointed for the place of their meeting for this great purpose, on the 15th of June.

These were the circumstances which had led the barons to Runnymede. Church, barons, people, all were combined to force

a tyrant to submission, but the PEOPLE had been the conquering and deciding power, and the barons did but appear as their representatives and warriors. Without the people they were and had felt themselves nothing. Before this power the tyrant quailed, and signed Magna Charta.*

But though it was SIGNED, it was not won. The slippery villain, John, had no intention, at the very moment that he put his hand to it, of ever observing it. He immediately treated it with contempt, and it was thus, in reality, of no further value than a bit of waste paper. It was of no greater worth than the various charters which the nation already possessed. Because the tyrant violated these, they had been compelled to arm against him; and now he contemned and violated both those and this. To become the law of the land, its title must be fought out. Ink was not strong enough: it must be signed in blood. The monarch must be forced not only to sign, but to respect it.

And who fought this out? Who triumphantly compelled the respect and obedience to the Great Charter? At every stage, and with unwavering prowess and patriotism—THE PEOPLE!

John, to put down the barons, called a fresh swarm of mercenaries from abroad. These Poictavins, Flemings, Brabanters, Gascons, Normans, and others, were but a fresh flight of those locusts, of which the barons themselves were the descendants: on all occasions, and under all kings, they had been brought over to subdue the liberties, and fatten on the lands of the people. Before these the barons could not stand. John raged from end to end of the kingdom, as we have observed, with his Manleon the Bloody, Falco without Bowels, Walter Buch the Murderer, Sottim the Merciless, and Godeschal the Iron-hearted. Castles and towers fell before him; all was plunder, rapine, and horror. John drove the King of Scots, whom the barons had engaged to make a descent in their favour, back to the very gates of Edinburgh; and, had it not been for the citizens of London, the country and cause must have been lost.

London stood firm; and there the barons took shelter. The Pope laid the city under an interdict; but in its noble patriotism, it set the ban at defiance; the citizens protected the barons; kept open the churches, rang their bells merrily, and celebrated their Christmas with unusual gaiety and festivity.

But though the Londoners lost not heart, the barons did: they could not bear the sight of their estates in the hands of the mercenaries; but, as they had before so complacently made over England to the Pope, they now as facilely made it over to France:

* Matthew Paris.

they offered the crown of England to Louis, the son and heir of Philip the French king, on condition that he brought an army to rescue them and their estates from the tyrant against whom they had risen, but with whom they were unable to cope. This was a fatal, and most un-English measure, which, had it succeeded, would eventually have reduced this country to a mere province of France. True patriots, rather than resort to so disgraceful a means, would have fought and fallen, or fought again, like Alfred, hand to hand with the people, till God and their swords had awarded to their prowess a late, perhaps, but a glorious victory. This was a coward act; it did not and could not succeed: though the barons and knights flew to the French standard, those nobles who came with John deserting him to fly to it, the people looked on the whole with true English suspicion and repugnance, and, during the remainder of John's reign, the united power of the French and the barons could not prevail against him. Louis confirmed the popular suspicion by beginning, as the Normans had done before, to seize castles and give them to his followers: had he succeeded, there would have been a *French Conquest*, as there had been a *Norman Conquest*. One of his followers too, the Marquis de Melun, divulged on his death-bed the ominous secret, that Louis had resolved, in case of his complete success, to destroy the present nobility, as William had destroyed the Saxon, and supply their place with French.

The barons, therefore, instead of conquering the charter, so far as it lay with them, had ruined, by their pusillanimous and un-English scheme, the kingdom for ever. But the people never lost heart: John died, and they resolved to set Henry, his son, on the throne, and drive out the French.

At this time, Louis and the barons not only held London and the south of England, but were powerfully supported in the north by the King of Scots, and in the west by the Prince of Wales; the king was but a boy of ten years old, and of course he was made, by the good regent Pembroke, a striking example to his class, and therefore worthy of immortal memory, to promise charters or anything. A civil war was now become the consequence of the rash act of the barons; they and the French stood arrayed against the prince and the people. Pembroke, with a fellow-feeling for his own class, was disposed to delay and to make truces, so as to draw the barons from Louis; but the people cared for neither truce nor Frenchmen. The sailors, under the brave Hugh de Burgh, the Constable of Dover, and the gallant archers of England, under William de Collingham, went hand and heart to work, and so well did they play their

parts, that in one single year, they had beaten the French and their baronial allies on all hands, and expelled Louis and the Frenchmen from the kingdom. From Collingham's archers, Louis himself only escaped by flying on board his ships: on his return, the brave sailors cut off and captured many of his ships; the bowmen drove the French army out of London, and the mariners of de Burgh completed the business by defeating, capturing, and destroying the whole French fleet, at the mouth of the Thames, with the exception of fifteen vessels. Henry was set firmly on the throne; the charter was made the law of the land; and this was done from first to last by the patriotic, unswerving, and unflinching people; the barons, indeed, attending the signing of the charter: but the people fought out its establishment, and that, after the signing, in opposition to the barons themselves. The Great Charter is, therefore, wholly and solely the work of the people of England; and the people should ever reflect with pride that it was those of their own order—their true ancestors—the brave bowmen whose descendants won the battles of Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt—the brave mariners, whose sons have made the universal ocean the home and the field of England's glory, who especially fought out and established for them the charter of their liberties.*

This charter was now not signed by the king before the *barons*, but was signed and ratified before the *parliament of the realm*, with the additional charter of the forest. And here, indeed, it was seen by the further and most important concessions made, what was the real power which had achieved the charter. Its benefit was extended to Ireland; a new clause was added, *ordering the destruction of every castle built or rebuilt since the commencement of the wars of John and his barons*; a severe blow to the baronial power itself. All the forests which had been inclosed since the reign of Henry II. were thrown open, and the deadly forest laws deprived of their bloody and capital power and reduced to mildness. This was in itself a noble, popular victory, and pregnant with vast advantages to the whole nation.

Nor was it here that the exertions of the people in defence of the charter ceased. In this reign we have certain evidence that they were a component part of parliament; the representatives of burghs and cities, as well as knights of the shire, being expressly mentioned in the parliament of 1265; and on all occasions they stoutly defended this great work of their hands, this great bulwark of their liberties. Long after the feeble Henry III.

* Rymer; Matt. Paris; Carte.

was in his grave, and his valiant son, Edward I., flushed with the glory of his victories in France, Scotland, and Wales, and in the height of his popularity, attempted, by the addition of a new clause to the Great Charter, to undermine its very foundations, and when the nobles and the clergy had demurred and threatened in vain—when the clergy had succumbed, and the nobles had retired sullenly to their estates—the brave citizens of London withstood him to his face, and struck effectual terror into his iron soul. “He thought,” says the historian, “that he could delude the plain citizens. He ordered the sheriff of London to call a public meeting, and read the new confirmation of the charters. The citizens met in St. Paul’s Churchyard, and listened with anxious ears. At every clause, except the last, they gave many blessings to the king for his noble grants; but when that last clause was read, the London burghers understood it as well as the noble lords had done, and they cursed as loud and as fast as they had blessed before. Edward took warning; he summoned the parliament to meet shortly again, and then he struck out the detested clause, and granted all that was asked of him in the forms prescribed.”*

The voice of the mass was heard above the voice of nobles and clergy; the lion-king of many victories quailed before it; and Magna Charta stood fixed for ever—THE WORK AND WILL OF THE PEOPLE.

CHAPTER V.

ORIGIN AND SUCCESSIVE PHASES OF ARISTOCRAFT.

“Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.”

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, Chap. xix. 25.

THE grand characteristic of an aristocracy, all the world over, ever has been, and still is, and ever will be, self-aggrandisement. This aggrandisement they will build up at the expense of any power or class that may be within their reach; the crown, the people, neighbouring nations—it matters not who or what—so that plunder is to be obtained. Here, indeed, lies the grand source of all the horrible wars which have made the world a pool of blood. This class must reap wealth and martial renown,

* Brady; Hemingford; Knighton; Hallam’s Middle Ages.

though kings fall, and nations are ruined. Nay, they have often carried their greediness to such a blind pitch, that they have forgotten their general interest in the thirst after each other's blood and property. Hence, especially, the internal wars which so long ravaged and rent asunder our own country. Their general, and what may be called their established policy, has been to band with the monarch against the people. This was pre-eminently the policy of ancient and savage times, because the people were then ignorant—ignorant of their rights and of their own power; and because, therefore, the king, the nobles, and the priests, including in themselves all the mastery and enchantments of the houses of CUNNING and STRENGTH, despised them, and held them as an easy prey. But nevertheless, whenever they deemed it for their interest, they were ever ready to band themselves against the crown. The crown, in fact, was a bauble which, like the mitre, the hat, and the crosier in the church, was held aloft by them in their own midst, as a magic and mysterious splendour, to bewitch and lay prostrate the mind of the weak multitude. They taught that it was a thing of divine origin—a thing anointed with the oil of the divine ordinance, and to be set only on oil-anointed heads. It was not enough that "the majesty which hedges round a king" should be that love and respect which would naturally flow from a grateful people towards the person of their chief magistrate, who ruled them with mildness, and spent his days and nights in planning and working out blessings for them—no; it must be regarded as something beyond the reach of reasoning, or of ordinary responsibilities. It was a thing which, though made of pure metal and sparkling stones, was arrayed with all those wonderful and incomprehensible glories, and rights, and essences, and potencies, which Craft knows so well how to employ for its secret purposes. It was, in fact, the great mystery of antiquity, the symbol of all mortal divinity; the blazing star of all glory and conquest; the arcanum of all powers, judgments, virtues, and wonders, which had descended from heaven to earth. It was the ark of the royal covenant—that between God and kings. In it lay all the books of the law of divine right, which had been given by God to kingship, on some Sinai, heaven alone knew where, and heaven alone knew when. But on this miraculous concentration of glory, right, and power, the aristocracy pretended to gaze with looks of deepest veneration; and the whole deluded multitude scarcely ever dared to gaze afar off, but fell prostrate in the dust, and let aristocracy, with its bauble, the crown, stalk with iron heel over their silly and uninquiring necks. They, the aristocracy, we have said, nevertheless, could

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occasionally rise against the crown-wearing head, but then it was to be remembered that it was only to set the marvellous symbol on one of their own heads, which also was sacred.

The great hordes of emigrants from the East, who brought this fatal policy and craft with them into Europe, continually raised the wearer of this symbol out of their own midst : and in Germany, this custom was carried down to a late period, and, indeed, ostensibly so till Buonaparte's invasion of that country, in the election of their emperors, though in reality the practice had degenerated into the hollowest of farces.

In other countries the feudal system gradually assumed a different form ; though in England, as our history demonstrates, it was long before legitimacy and hereditary descent had established anything like their modern fixedness. When the Normans conquered England, the aristocracy came banded with the crown, because it promised to share the spoil with them ; but this spoil once in their own possession, they all aimed at establishing their own, almost regal independence ; and were not tardy in lifting rebellious eyes against the hand which had enriched them. In William's own time, as we have seen, these symptoms exhibited themselves, but in the times of his successors they continually became conspicuous. Many of these successors were notorious usurpers, who were obliged to bribe the aristocracy to support their claims by fresh grants of estates and honours. Neither the crown nor the aristocracy, for ages, feared the people ; the squabbles for plunder and for honours lay entirely between themselves. The aristocracy had nothing to gain from the people. They were chiefly villains and labourers, whose labour they enjoyed. The whole land was already in their hands, and in that of the king. Whoever, therefore, got any more land must get it from one of their own class, or from the king. Hence, every feudal baron had his fortified castle, and his band of armed retainers, and made war on his neighbour to plunder him. Hence the lands of the crown were a perpetual prize at which they grasped, and at which they sought to grasp by setting up fresh claimants to the crown, and stirring up civil wars. This was the course of aristocratic policy till the reign of Henry VII. This was the cause of the melancholy fates of Richard II., Edward II., of Henry VI., and of those long, horrible civil contentions—the Wars of the Roses.

In all these revolutions, each new monarch, tottering on an unrightful throne, sought to prop it by vast grants of lands and honours to the most powerful nobles ; and through these causes, some of those nobles reached a height most astonishing, as we shall see. But the body, blinded by its rapacity and ambition,

forgot that though this system might aggrandise a certain number, it must eventually weaken the class. Every new monarch, it is true, made large grants to his supporters, but these were necessarily out of the lands of the crown, or of other nobles. At the next change the scene was reversed. Those lands were confiscated, their possessors commonly beheaded; and when a monarch like Henry II., the Edwards, or later Henrys, felt himself firmly seated, he again reclaimed all the lands alienated by the crown. When the wary Henry VII. came to the throne, the nature and tendency of these things had become so apparent,—he saw so clearly the source of all the distractions of the nation, in the rapacity and haughty ambition of the aristocracy,—that he set himself steadily to work to curb and reduce them. Many of the most overgrown of them had already fallen in the conflict they themselves had raised. Others he lopped off himself. He sternly exacted all rights and property of the crown, and sought to enrich himself, and thus to make himself independent of the aristocracy.

Here then terminated the first great era of aristocracy, in England; that of feudal barons and aggrandisement by the strong hand. So sternly and firmly did the Tudors hold the reins of government, that the aristocracy came to quail like beaten hounds before them. The persons of the greatest amongst them were seized, and their heads lopped off, especially by Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, with very little ceremony. One is amazed to see how the Northumberlands, the Dudleys, the Norfolks, the Westmorelands, the Warwicks, the Surreys, and the Somersets, who before bearded the mightiest monarchs of England, shook them on their thrones, and even hurled them from them, now trembled before the haughty Tudors, humbly supplicated, and fell, lauding, even with abject tears on the very edge of the block, their ruthless destroyers. Here, indeed, had commenced the second great era in the history of the English aristocracy. A new power had grown into consideration—the People. This power, which had occasionally shown its firmness and bold spirit, even when it was numerically weak, and still weaker from its ignorance and poverty, was now become comparatively intelligent and wealthy from its own indefatigable industry and enterprises. The nobles stood now between these two powers. The crown was become, at once, strong through their dissensions, and wealthy from their confiscated wealth, as well as through the great resources daily opening themselves in the popular affluence and trade. Under the Tudors, indeed, the popular power, although the monarchs seemed actually despotic, was progressing in the most marvellous manner, through a variety of causes which can be regarded as

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nothing less than glorious developments by the great ruling Providence, of those powers and acts which were destined by him to display a new and miraculous page of the world's history and advance.

America was discovered; the sea-path to the East Indies was opened; the projected use of the mariner's compass had opened up all the ancient and hidden wilds of the ocean; a still greater discovery,—that of printing,—had made accessible all the lands and oceans of the human mind; the Reformation had broken the shackles of superstition; the mind was freed from its deadliest nightmare—from the benumbing touch of the great papal torpedo. Great and glorious as was this change, a change as if the universe were suddenly enlarged, and a new and more divine sun were set in the midst of it, the immense elasticity of the English mind rose and filled joyfully all the light and space opened by these events. Superstition and papal cruelty chased over to us the manufacturers and ingenious citizens of the Continent. Lombards, Flemish, French, fled from the tender mercies of popes, inquisitors, Spanish extirpations, St. Bartholomew assassins, to the shores of England with the shuttle and the loom, the press and the graver. Wealth and industry and enterprise made the land busy as a market; and on the sea swarmed our ships, carrying to and fro spices and wool, the cocoons of the silk-worm, and the gathered products of far-off regions. The spirit of our mariners, so proud even in the days of King John and the Charter, now rose into unheard of glory. Our Drakes and Raleighs, and Frobishers, scattered Armadas at home, and carried terror to the most distant shores. The sea-fame of England rose, never more to set, and the People began in America to lay the foundations of that colonial empire, now become so stupendous.

In the earlier days of the Tudors, this great popular power, now in such rapid growth, was not, however, fully aware of its own strength. It had not yet risen out of that condition and habit of acquiescence which ages of the haughty dominance of kings and nobles had impressed upon it. It made, therefore, but comparatively feeble attempts at resistance to the arbitrariness of royal will, but seemed calmly to watch and to enjoy the royal exercise of that lopping and trimming of the nobility which had so long and so rudely domineered over it. Towards the end of the Tudor dynasty, the people, however, gave some bold demonstrations of their fast awakening to a consciousness of their rights; and Elizabeth, wary as she was bold, presently gave way to them. But when the Stuart dynasty mounted the throne, equally arbitrary as the Tudors, but destitute of their popular qualities, then burst forth the strength and spirit of the people.

The aristocracy, struck with terror at the manifestation of this, to their consternation, awful and gigantic power, shrunk back, and made common cause with the crown. They entered into a vain contest with the awakened genius of the people, now rendered daring by the novel revelations of the press, by the wealth gathered from commerce, and from the distribution of the monastic lands. The Lion of England was now on his feet, and he quickly laid crown and coronet beneath them.

But though the people had become aware of their strength, they had not learned how to use it. They had not learned all the arts and stratagems of their enemies. They had not learned, —what, indeed, had they learned but the great fact that they were strong, were a people, and not slaves?—oh! they had everything else to learn! They had yet to win their liberties, not so much from the crown, from the aristocracy, as from experience. Their antagonists had this experience on their sides; *they* had only a feeling that they had right, and long-suffering, wrong, and shame; and these begat a glorious indignation, with its vigorous concomitant redress. Yet never was the wisdom of Pope's assertion—

"A little learning is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep, or taste not, the Pierian spring"—

more strikingly demonstrated. They had drunk of the knowledge of the Bible, and of literature through the press. But this knowledge to them was like new wine, drunk in the eagerness of a sudden acquisition. They were divinely intoxicated. They were full of the afflatus of their rights, their powers, and capabilities; but this was the very fermentation, godlike as it was, which was sure to plunge them into error. They had all the great field of their just inheritance, and of the principles and boundaries of human and social right to explore, and to take careful possession of. This was a great work, which inevitably involved much time, many battles of passion and of opinion; many errors, falls and risings again, before they had perfectly learned what was due to themselves, and the still harder lesson of what was strictly due to others. In such a period of intellectual and moral conflict, many a great people had gone down. Kings and aristocracies, armies and tactics had been too mighty for them, and had crushed them into a second and eternal slavery. In England, great indeed were the perils of this crisis, but the national bravery, and, we may say, the hand of Providence, who had great things for us as a people to do, saved it. First went down the monarchy. Then the glorious patriots of that day, raised by their fiery eloquence, and their more than Roman

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daring, the nation to a pitch which it had yet neither the education nor the experience to enable it to maintain. Traitor ambition enslaved them through the army: and the army, once more in alliance with artful aristocracy, brought in again monarchy. But the Stuarts were a race of incorrigible dunces in the school of experience: they were swept away, and with them terminated the second great period of our aristocratic history.

During this era they had first been humbled by the crown, and then compelled to alliance with it against the people. They had now, in the final expulsion of the Stuarts, learned a lesson so striking in itself, and of such fatal import to them; that it became written in indelible characters on their hearts. They beheld the ancient order of things totally reversed. The people, who had been regarded but as the ground on which the only creatures worthy of the name of men trod; or, at best, but as the dust of the ground which dared to rise no higher than to curl round and lick their shoes, now stood forth in vast and colossal masses as unquestionably the great and supreme power on earth. The crown, which they, the aristocracy, had always held as their gift, was gravely seized, and presented as its sole and resumeable gift to the man of its choice. They themselves, who had formerly been the sole lawgivers, and had, at their pleasure, curbed the crown, and humbled it to the dust, now stood before the people and the people's king, a third and questionable estate, which another movement of the mass might for ever annihilate. The reign of the strong hand—the reign of feudalism—was for ever past. No menaces of hostile arms, no martial alliance with kingship, could ever serve them. The reign of STRENGTH was closed: there was but one alternative, and to that they resorted—to CUNNING.

Here commenced the third and last era of aristocratic power in England,—the era which has continued to our days, and yet continues. They could no longer openly conquer the people by violence,—they resolved therefore to deceive them. In this their subtle scheme, how stupendous has been their success! Artfully allying themselves with the crown, because thence should flow on them honours and emoluments, they have, at the same time, eternally boasted of "The glorious constitution of England;" of "its three finely-balanced powers—king, nobles, and commons." The people, busy in weaving and spinning, in all species of curious handicraft art and manufactures, in farming at home, in trafficking on the seas, in founding colonies, and conquering nations abroad, have gone on wonderfully augmenting their own wealth, and the value of the lands of the aristocracy.

In the mean time, this aristocracy, burrowing like moles mining in the dark, have by degrees carefully ousted the people out of the constitution altogether. As the old borough towns fell into insignificance, they resisted all removal of their franchises by their everlasting cries of the glorious, the sacred constitution, which must not be touched. By this means, and by purchase, they ultimately became the possessors of the third state in the constitution,—of the house called the House of Commons, and the consequences everybody knows, and everybody feels. It is long since the people of England ceased to possess any actual share in the constitution. The House of Commons, no longer the House of the People, became the greatest man-trap which ever was framed in the history of the world by Cunning and Strength. It became a rack on which the people were stretched and compelled to give up at pleasure their wealth and their heart's blood. In their own name the people had the mortification and the misery to see their money voted away; their children murdered in foreign wars for the maintenance of the rotten system of aristocracy; the profits of their ships, their manufactures, their handicraft labours, their steam-engines and their ploughs, all extracted from their pockets, and expended on the brood of the aristocracy. The national debt, the most stupendous debt ever piled on the head of any luckless nation since the foundation of the world, has been heaped on them by this Protean and insolent class; and, spite of the fame of the Reform Bill, aristocracy still sits in the people's house, and makes them groan with its exactions.

But the extent to which it has succeeded in possessing itself of everything belonging to the British people, government, colonies, offices, taxes, pensions, public charities, corn-laws, and, in fact, of everything, will form the subject of a later chapter. We have here taken a rapid glance at its successive periods, shapes, and changes, and shall now proceed to trace these out a little more closely.

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CHAPTER VI.

HISTORIC VIEW OF THE ARISTOCRACY OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

WE have seen that the broods of mongrel foreigners which the Conqueror had planted in the land, were of the most savage and rapacious nature. They were equally ready to plunder the people as to revolt against their king and benefactor, if they were at all restrained in their lawless courses. The usurpation of Henry I. obliged him to give to these marauders fresh license. Stephen, again, in the same case, was, in order to win them to himself and prevent them going to the empress, compelled to grant them all permission to fortify their castles and build new ones; and these, says Henry of Huntingdon, became, almost without exception, dens of thieves and cut-throats. But this did not secure faith where no faith was. They speedily began to declare that they were not sufficiently paid for their adhesion, and began to seize the keys of royal castles and estates. Having got what they could of these, they fell away from him on all sides; and, shutting themselves up in the castles which he himself had allowed them to fortify, laid him under the necessity of either besieging them one after another, or of granting fresh concessions to their clamorous and insatiable demands of lands, honours, and offices. The Saxon chronicler has left a most striking description of these so-called nobles, and of their treatment of the people:—"All this king's time, all was dissension, and evil, and rapine. The great men soon rose against him. They had sworn oaths, but maintained no truth. They had built castles, which they held out against him. They cruelly oppressed the wretched people of the land with this castle-work. They filled their castles with devils and evil men. They seized those whom they supposed to have any goods, and threw them into prison for their gold and silver, and inflicted on them unutterable tortures. Some they hanged up by the feet, and smoked with foul smoke; some by the thumbs, or by the beard, and hung coats of heavy mail on their feet. They threw them into dungeons with adders and snakes and toads They made many thousands perish with hunger. They laid tribute after tribute upon towns and cities, and this in their language they called *tenserie* (chastisement). When the townsmen had nothing more to give, they set fire to all the towns. Thou mightest go a whole day's journey, and not find a man sitting in a town, nor an acre of land tilled. The poor died of hunger, and those who

had been men well to do, begged for bread. Never was more mischief done by heathen invaders. To till the ground was to plough the sands of the sea. This lasted the nineteen years that Stephen was king, and it grew continually worse and worse."

This is a pretty good picture of the ancestors of our aristocracy to begin with. To such an extent had they not only invaded the property of the people, but the property and demesne of the crown, that on Henry II. coming to the throne, he found that, of the vast estates of his fathers, there was not enough left to maintain his establishment. With the sanction, therefore, of his council, he set about to wrest from them his own. But he was compelled to raise a great army to accomplish this, and to besiege and drive out those sturdy usurpers. Some of their castles were surrendered without bloodshed; but others were only reduced by storm or famine. Eleven hundred of these "dens of thieves" were levelled to the ground, to the great joy of the people. But this great work had nearly cost Henry his life at the siege of the castle of Bridgenorth, which Hugh de Mortimer held against him. Amongst the names of the nobles thus introduced, we find not only this Mortimer, but the Earl of Nottingham, the Earl of Albemarle, the Bishop of Winchester, Stephen's brother, and other great names; these were, however, not only such as had fortified themselves in their recent aggressions, but there still remained the host of the castles of older times, to which some of these very men, when expelled from their more newly gotten holds, retired.

In the absence of Henry in his continental wars, and in the unsettled times of Richard and John, we read that the whole kingdom was studded with these castles, from which the owners were ready to dart out on all that they were able to overcome: they extended their parks and chases in imitation of the kings, and, for this purpose, drove, with lawless violence, the people from their fields, meadows, and pasture lands; and when these ferocious hunters burst through inclosures and swept over corn-fields in pursuit of the flying deer, the wretched cottagers were compelled to hurry to their doors with provisions and refreshments, lest they should be reckoned disaffected and be punished as traitors.*

While the people were thus recklessly trodden down, the nobles continually increased their armed bands, and assumed a style of living at once rude, savage, and oppressive. From the king downwards, every man kept about him a great train, and travelled, thus attended, from place to place. The train of

* William of Newbury; Roger Hoveden, &c.

Henry II., as described by Peter of Blois, a cotemporary and friend of the king, consisted of knights and nobles, throngs of cavalry and foot soldiers, baggage-waggons, tents, and pack-horses, players, prostitutes, and marshals of the prostitutes, gamesters, cooks, confectioners, mimes, dancers, barbers, pimps, and parasites; and at the setting forth of the day's march, there was such jostling, overturning, shouting, and brawling, that you might have imagined hell had let loose its inhabitants.

The style of living and the train of Beckett, the chancellor of the kingdom, was still more extraordinary: his house was crowded by several hundred servants, many in the richest dresses, and a perpetual feast was served up in costliest vessels. On his embassy to Paris, he was attended by two hundred knights, many barons and nobles, and a complete host of domestics, all richly armed and attired, the chancellor himself having four-and-twenty changes of apparel: his train of waggons and sumpter-horses, his hounds and hawks, his huntsmen and falconers, seemed to announce the presence of more than a king. When he entered a town, the ambassadorial procession was led by two hundred and fifty boys, singing national songs: then followed his hounds, led in couples, and these were succeeded by eight waggons, each with five large horses and five drivers in frocks; each wagon was covered with skins, and guarded by two men and a fierce mastiff: two of the waggons were loaded with ale to give to the people, one carried the vessels and furniture of his chapel, another of his bed-chamber, a fifth was loaded with his kitchen apparatus, a sixth carried his attendant plate and wardrobe, and the other two were devoted to the use of his household servants. After the waggons, came twelve sumpter-horses, a monkey riding on each with a groom behind on his knees: then came the esquires, carrying the shields, and leading the war-horses of their respective knights, and then other esquires, youths of gentle blood, falconers, officers of the household, knights, and priests, and, last of all, appeared the great chancellor himself with his familiar friends.* That the French nobility had not arrived at this cumbrous pomp is evident by the French remarking, on seeing it, "What manner of man must the king of England be, when his chancellor travels in such state?"

In the reign of Cœur de Lion, his chancellor, Longchamp, manifested an equal pomp; a numerous guard always surrounded his house, he seldom travelled attended by less than a thousand horses, and cotemporaries declared that, wherever he staid a night on the road, in abbey or house, he and his

* Fitzstephen; Peter of Blois.

retainers consumed three years' produce of its lands : and it does not appear that they were very nice in their eating. Peter of Blois describes what the state of the table was at court in Henry II.'s time, and from that we may judge what it was in the houses of these illiterate and pompous nobles. "Amongst courtiers, there is no order, no plan, no moderation, either in food, in horse exercise, or in watchings. A priest, or a soldier attached to the court, has bread put before him which is not kneaded, not leavened, made of the dregs of beer, bread like lead, full of bran, and unbaked ; wine, spoiled either by being sour or mouldy—thick, greasy, rancid, tasting of pitch, and rapid. I have sometimes seen wine so full of dregs, put before noblemen, that they were compelled rather to filter than drink it, with their eyes shut and their teeth closed, with loathing and retching. The beer at court is horrid to taste, and filthy to look at. On account of the great demand, meat, whether sweet or not, is sold alike : the fish is many days old, yet its stinking does not lessen its price. The servants care nothing whatever whether the unlucky guests are sick or dead, provided there are fuller dishes sent up to their master's table ; indeed, the tables are sometimes filled with carrion, and the guests' stomachs thus become the tombs of those who die in the course of nature." He describes such fatal consequences from this evil, just as is natural to expect ; but this was the direct result of such enormous trains. A much worse attendant of them was the plundering of the people by the purveyors and followers of the court or the army. These fellows, say cotemporary writers, could enter the houses of farmers and peasantry without leave, take up their lodgings, and stay as long as it suited them, and not only eat and drink their fill of whatever they found, but in their wantonness, burn or destroy what they could not consume ; at other times, they would carry it away and sell it. If the owners ventured to remonstrate, they would probably burn their houses about their ears, and mutilate them, and even kill them. Nor were their goods only plundered and wasted, the honour of their wives and daughters was an equally free prey to the swarms of protected spoilers.

Such things have Englishmen endured, and that not for a moment, but for ages, from the men of pure blood. All these practices of pride and oppression, these great trains of the nobles, these plunderings and outrages of purveyors and nobles, continued to be the subjects of complaint from century to century. To such a pitch did the state of the nobles arrive, that we shall see, in the reign of Edward IV., Warwick, the king-maker, maintained regularly in his different castles, no less than 30,000 men. During

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all this period, the severest laws were made to keep down the people. They were allowed only to dress according to the enactment of the parliament, that is, of the nobles. They were not allowed to practise the same games as the nobles,—hunting, hawking, jousting, &c. These were forbidden to all under the degree of an esquire, and they were obliged to content themselves with humbler amusements. In what light they were regarded, is very strikingly manifested by the declaration of Richard II. to them, when driven by a multiplicity of oppressions and insults to seek redress in a mass under Wat Tyler. After he had promised them all their demands, which were but reasonable, and had thus caused the main body to disperse, he addressed the rest thus: "Rustics ye have been and are, and in bondage shall ye remain; not such as ye have heretofore known, but in a condition incomparably more vile!"

This young Pharaoh was but a boy of fifteen years of age, and what he spoke was to a certainty dictated to him by the nobles about him, and speaks the full sense of their class.

Of the proceedings of the nobles during the reign, or rather absence of Richard I. and the horrible John, we have already spoken. Had they been a patriotic and reasonable body, they would have stood firm against the aggressions of such a fellow as John on the rights of his brother and sovereign, and on those of the people; but they were always grasping at their own advantage out of the follies and weaknesses of the monarchs, and thus the kingdom became reduced to the condition in which John left it.

The reign of his weak and unprincipled son Henry III., was one continual squabble between king, and barons, and people. The king, an imbecile wretch, was in the hands of a new swarm of foreigners, who, for their own views, were continually urging him to aggressions on and plunder of the people, and on the old barons, for the sake of the transfer of their estates. These Gascons and Poitevins violated every article of the Great Charter with contempt, saying continually, "What signify these English laws to us?" The people and part of the barons again rose in arms against the king. The Earl of Leicester, the king's brother-in-law, became the people's champion after the death of the good Earl of Pembroke. This man, whom the people long after revered as a grand exception to his class, and whom they considered so extraordinary on that account, that they wished to have him canonized, and styled him "St. Simon the Righteous," was a foreigner. He had great abilities, and saw that the only honest and, indeed, only safe way for him to escape the ignominious fate which the whole juggling brood of aliens were bring-

ing on themselves by irritation of the people, insolence to the nobles, and the excitement of the king to mischief, was to make himself a stand against them as the protector of the popular rights. At the parliament of Oxford, called the Mad Parliament, in 1258, Leicester and the barons demanded that four knights of the shire should be elected by the freeholders to lay before parliament all breaches of law and justice; that a new sheriff should be annually chosen by the freeholders every year in each city, and that the sessions of parliament should be held annually; and so strong did they find themselves in popular favour, that they readily triumphed over the king, and drove many of the foreigners out of the kingdom. But the barons could not long maintain anything like a patriotic show. The people soon vehemently complained that they, in their turn, had filled every part of government with their own creatures, and had established an intolerable oligarchy. The knights of the shires protested that the barons had held possession of the sovereign authority for eighteen months, and had done no good in the way of reform. They themselves fell into quarrels and factions, and the remainder of the reign was a miserable scene of civil wars, in which ultimately the Earl of Leicester with all the barons and knights of his party, to the number of one hundred and eighty, were ruthlessly butchered in the battle of Evesham, all quarter being refused by the king and his party; and the city of London deprived of its charter. But the popular spirit was too determined now to be thus put down. Everywhere resistance broke out, under Leicester's son, Simon de Montfort, Adam Gordon, the Earl of Gloucester, and others, which not even the martial vigour of the Prince Edward, afterwards Edward I, could subdue, and it became necessary to restore the charter of London, and grant many popular privileges.*

We have already noticed the vain attempt of Edward I. to wheedle the citizens of London into the betrayal of the charter. Equally decisive was their bold resistance, when, in 1297, he seized unconstitutionally on some of their property, wool and hides, for his warlike needs.† During his reign, he kept the nobles too much occupied in his wars to allow them much leisure for aggressions on the popular liberties; but the reign of his imbecile son brought back once more all the scandalous influx of foreigners and the bloody squabbles of the nobles. The king was first in the hands of the insolent favourite Piers Gaveston,

* Matt. Paris.; Holinshed; Rymer; Speed; Brady; Wykes; Matt. Westminster; Annals of Waverley, &c. &c.

† Hemmingford; Walsingham; Knyghton.

then of the De Spensers. The opposition to and destruction of these fellows, caused terrible scenes of hanging, drawing, and quartering, by whichever party of the nobles happened for the time to have the upper hand. The fall of these favourites only made way for the rise of Roger Mortimer, the favourite of the licentious queen Isabella. The queen and this paramour Mortimer perpetrated on the miserable king, through a set of hired assassins, a murder, the horror of all history, and then the paramour fell before the indignant son. All those insolent upstarts and scoundrels were adorned with fine titles, and had they not been cut off, would have transmitted beautiful blood to a race bearing the same well-sounding names. Gaveston was Earl of Cornwall, a royal dignity; was married to the king's own niece, Margaret de Clare, and was regent of the kingdom in the king's absence: in reality, he was a Gascon adventurer; the De Spensers, father and son, who were poor dependents of the Earl of Lancaster, were covered with royal honours. The father was made Earl of Winchester, and the son married to the daughter of the late Earl of Gloucester. Mortimer was made Earl of March.*

Such is the stuff out of which nobles and favourites in all ages have been manufactured by kings, the fountains of honour. These titles, before which the multitude have so long and so meekly bowed, have been hung on the shoulders of the vilest vagabonds in history, one after another, till they have become like old suits of masking attire in a Jew's shop, so often let out to the dirty and the diseased, that no prudent man would venture to touch them.

Edward III., by his bloody wars in Scotland and France, raised the military renown of the nation to the highest pitch, especially by the battles of Cressy and Poitiers, where, says the historian, the bowmen of England really did the business. In these he consumed an immensity of blood and treasure, but kept his ambitious barons pretty well employed. This was of essential advantage to the progress of the people, though the foreign possessions retained by Edward at the end of his reign bore no proportion, in their importance, to the extent and fame of his arms. Scotland was lost; and in France, he had only Bordeaux, Bayonne, a few towns on the Dordogne, Calais, and a strip of land round it.*

By the singular alternation of an able and a weak monarch, which so strangely distinguish our history, the iron-souled Ed-

* De la More; Walsingham; Tyrrel; Leland; Rymer; Knyghton; Froissart; Speed; Hemmingford; Palgrave, &c. &c.

† Barante's Hist. des Ducs de Bourgogne.

ward was succeeded by his feeble grandson, Richard II. Here we have again all the disgraceful scenes of favouritism, and of truculent nobles seeking each other's blood. Richard was a mere boy when set upon the throne, and he was treated with such fulsome adulation by the bishops and nobles, that historians justly attribute to them the calamities and crimes which ensued. We are reminded of the sickening sycophancy of the bishops displayed ages afterwards on the accession of James VI. of Scotland to the throne of England. In him they fostered a pedantic tyranny, and a low duplicity which he taught to his son, and which brought that son to the block, and the monarchy and realm to ruin. But here the consequences were more speedily visible, as the times were more barbarous;—the kingdom was at once steeped in blood and confusion, and the king himself deposed and destroyed.

His mother, the widow of Edward the Black Prince, if we are to judge of her children by her former husband, the Earl of Kent, could not have been very nice in the morals she inculcated, or very successful in that inculcation, for one of them was a common assassin. This lady, who had popularly gone by the name of "The Fair Maid of Kent," had been twice married before the Black Prince espoused her. From the first husband, Montacute, the Earl of Salisbury, she had been divorced, and her second husband, the Earl of Kent, had scarcely been dead three months, when she married the Black Prince. From jealousy of the designs of Richard's nobles, and probably too well founded, she surrounded her son, a boy of only eleven years old, with a troop of ministers and officers of obscure birth and fortune. These men, who had everything to gain from their position, monopolised the boy-king entirely; managed to engross his affections, and to reap honours and estates in rapid abundance. They, as well as the bishops, paid him the most fulsome adulation, and if they did not preach the doctrine of divine right to him, did something very near it. Here were sown plentifully the miseries of his reign, both to himself and people. His powerful and ambitious uncles, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and the Duke of Gloucester, became the sworn enemies of all those men. Into Richard's mind, in return, were infused the darkest jealousies of these uncles, and the deepest duplicity.

The miserable condition in which Edward III. had left his people, spite of all his military glory, soon gave ample opportunity for the practical application of his private lessons. As is only too commonly the case, the glory of the king and aristocracy had been purchased by the grinding and contumely of the

people. There was martial renown, with domestic depression and general distress. To carry on Edward's wars, the people had been fleeced without mercy. The eternal demands of more money could not be kept up with by the usual modes of extorting it. The people were fast rising into a sense of their rights, and yet a great portion of them were still held as vills or serfs, bound to the soil, and sold or transmitted with the cattle and estates of the nobles. The stern mail-clad and victory-crowned hand of Edward kept all fast, and the terror of his name enabled the aristocracy to resist every attempt of the people to assert their just liberty. The coasts were harassed and plundered by foreign fleets, the interior plundered by a poll-tax, in addition to all others, which was farmed out to Flemish and Lombard merchants, who extorted it with unheard of harshness and insolence.

That which the fear of Edward kept down, however, burst out rapidly under the government of a mere child. The exasperated people in Kent and Essex rose against the exactors of the poll-tax, and butchered, or chased them away. Government sent out commissioners to inquire into these proceedings; they served the commissioners the same. The chief justice, Belknap, was sent down to try the offenders. They made him glad to fly, and chopped off the heads of the jurors and clerks of commission, and sticking them on poles, carried them through the country. This, with the infamous insult offered to the daughter of Wat the Tyler, at Dartford, and similar deeds, brought Tyler, Jack Straw, and John Ball, to London, with their hundred thousand men at their heels. The complaints of these poor people were loud, and with just cause, of their injuries from judges and officers of the courts, and from the old grievance of purveyance; the nobility, as well as the court, having come to regard purveyance as part of their ways and means, or, in other words, the plunder of the defenceless people as their lawful prey.

The demands they made of the king were of the simplest kind, and wonderfully moderate under the circumstances, and enlightened for their class and age. They were merely these four:—
1. The total abolition of slavery for themselves and their children for ever. 2. The reduction of the rent of good land to fourpence the acre—a good price then. 3. The full liberty of buying and selling like other men, in all fairs and markets. 4. A general pardon for all past offences.

Had these demands been promptly met, as they ought to have been, all mischief would have been prevented. The people showed wonderful moderation, till they saw themselves despised by the government, and had been, by the timid citizens of London,

treated to great quantities of liquor. When the king at length came out to them, they treated him with great respect, and there is no historical evidence whatever that Tyler gave or intended any insult to him, but on the contrary, that the first blow was treacherously struck by Walworth, the lord mayor. Even when their leader was thus perfidiously slain, they put themselves under the guidance of the king; and, had he been honest in the declarations that he made to them, all would have been well for them and for him. He declared that all their requests were reasonable and were granted. He gave them a charter containing all they asked for; but this was a hollow part which he was set to play by the nobles, to whom, when he had acted out one part of his drama, he turned, and said—"What shall I do next?" As we have observed, so soon as they were dispersed, trusting to the faith and word of a king, he then declared—" *Rustics ye have been and are, and in bondage shall ye remain; not such as ye have heretofore known, but in a condition incomparably more vile!*"

Richard now found himself at the head of 40,000 horse, and he declared that all his charters and promises meant nothing at all, and falling on those to whom he had not only granted these charters, but also a free pardon, he hanged, drew, quartered, and gibbeted without mercy, to the amount, according to Holinshed, of 15,000 men.

So daring and flagrant a piece of hypocrisy and faithlessness was not, and could not be the work of a boy of fifteen; it was that of his nobles, whom he had openly consulted as to the whole of his movements in the field at Islington; and it came down speedily with dreadful recoil, first on the nobles, and then on himself.

At first Gloucester and his party, Bolingbroke, Earl of Derby, the son of John of Gaunt, then absent in Spain, the Earls of Arundel and Warwick, Arundel, the primate, and others, forced the king to submit to them, and drove away his favourites; but Richard, now two-and-twenty, had well learned the lesson of artifice which they had taught him. He assumed a guard of 10,000 picked archers; and with much adroitness, seizing these nobles one after another, took off their heads, leaving alone Bolingbroke, whom he pretended to favour, and made Earl of Hereford. The Duke of Gloucester, it was supposed, was privately strangled to avoid public odium, and for this purpose Richard had about him practised hands, and none of them so conspicuous as his half-brother, John Holland, who had committed two notorious murders, and whom he, notwithstanding, created Duke of Exeter. It is probable that Bolingbroke was spared for a future opportunity, out of dread of the powerful Duke of Lan-

caster, his father, and of his own popularity. But Richard had inflicted the fullest poetical justice on the great nobles who had taught him to delude the people, and now his own turn came. He was become reckless, extravagant, and regardless of constitution or laws, and Bolingbroke, his intended victim, whom he had banished, saw his time, appeared, deposed the poor puppet of a king, and took his place.*

But Henry IV., though a successful, was a palpable usurper, and his throne was no bed of roses. He saw himself surrounded by hostile spirits and persons, and the greater part of his reign was spent in anxious exertions to prop a tottering throne. The scenes which took place amongst the nobles on the opening of his first parliament are described by the historians to have been of a most singular but characteristic kind. "There was rarely a lord who had not been involved in the inexplicable intrigues of the last twelve years. There was plenty of ground for recrimination, and the opportunity was not lost. The terms liar and traitor resounded from every corner of the house; forty gauntlets were thrown upon the floor, as the pledges of battle in lists. A timid, or an unreflecting king would have been lost in this perilous storm, which the firm and crafty Henry managed to subdue. The appellants were let off with the forfeiture of their titles and estates, which they had received from Richard as a reward for their services against his uncle Gloucester; and thus the Dukes of Albermarle, Surrey, and Exeter, the Marquis of Dorset, and the Earl of Gloucester, descended to their former rank, and became Earls of Rutland, Kent, Huntingdon, and Somerset, and Lord le Despenser, under which names they will presently appear in plots and conspiracies.*

These plots and conspiracies were certain; for so far from the greedy nobles brooking this stripping of their ill-gotten estates and titles, they were clamorous for more. Henry was therefore not only threatened from France and Scotland, but the very men who had set him on the throne, disappointed in their expectations of honour and power, rose against him to pull him down. The Percies in the North, Worcester in the midland counties, aided by Gloucester and Mortimer in Wales, menaced the very existence of his throne, and though he finally overcame and destroyed the greatest part of them, Worcester, Hotspur, and his father, yet his life was embittered by them, and probably shortened, for he died at the early age of forty-seven, and had long before become gloomy, solitary, and suspicious, even of his

* Froissart; Knyghton; Rymer; Walsingham, Rot. Parl.

† Rot. Parl.; Walsingham.

son and heir. This heir ran too a short, but, according to the notion of the times, a bright career, ravaging the neighbouring kingdom of France, and leaving behind him the fame of the field of Agincourt, but no other permanent fruit of his campaigns, his miserable son, Henry VI.—the country having seen the unusual sight of *two* able monarchs in succession—when a mere child, having the territories of France finally and for ever stripped from him.

During these reigns the people had made great advance. They had shown everywhere their martial bravery. The bowmen of England had again won the battle of Agincourt; the French, notwithstanding their former severe lessons, still deeming the use of the bow degrading to knights, and rejecting the services of the burghers and other plebeians, holding that France should be defended only by *gentlemen*! The plebeian bowmen of England soon laid low the Constable of France, and dispersed the whole vanguard before the chivalry of England had struck a single blow. The battle of Agincourt, which laid in the dust almost the whole nobility of France, was, even more decidedly than Cressy or Poitiers, the work of *the people*. At home, in the mean time, many valuable privileges were wrung from these two Henrys; from the consciousness of usurpation in the first, and from the constant want of money in the second. One of the most important of these was a law establishing that the powers of parliament should, in no case, be delegated to a standing committee.

CHAPTER VII.

“Like the other temporary forms which society has successively assumed, FEUDALISM had fulfilled its purposes in the grand process of civilization, and was now to pass away with the occasion that had called for it, and the peculiar condition of things by which it was maintained.”

PICTORIAL HIST. OF ENGLAND.

THE fortunes of Henry VI. and those of his predecessor, Richard II., bear a striking resemblance to each other. Both were set on the throne as mere children, Richard at eleven, and Henry at nine. Both, as was to be expected, became the coveted prize—the prey of nobles and favourites. Both were involved by the powerful and greedy factions around them, in destruction.

Scarcely had Richard ascended the throne, when Tyler and Jack Straw appeared with the men of Kent and Essex in London, demanding popular justice. Scarcely had Henry ascended his, when the men of Kent again appeared, under the guidance of Jack Cade, and with complaints and demands of precisely the same nature. The mode of deluding the people in the former case was professedly adopted in the latter, and one scene became a fac-simile of the other. Scarcely were these affairs dismissed, when the factions of the nobles produced similar confusions to those of Richard's reign; and, to close the comparison, a competition appeared for the throne, not in a usurper, but in the lineal descendant of the old line. But now the contest was not so soon decided: on both sides were ranged far mightier powers. The nobles, by plunder of the crown and of each other, which the Bolingbrokes, in consequence of their defective title to the crown, had not dared to reclaim, had now grown to their highest and most haughty estate; and the question which set them in fierce array against each other was not so much who should be king, as who should obtain or retain the possession of the vast booty of honours and estates. The adherents of the reigning family were revelling in the wealth and power torn from the Plantagenets by the successful usurpation of Henry IV.; and the adherents of the Duke of York, the present claimant, knew, if he succeeded, that this was theirs. Here, then, began the bloody and furious Wars of the Roses, the civil strife of Lancaster and York, which steeped all England in gore, and introduced such a series of slaughters, beheadings, and assassinations, that they seemed to become naturalised to the country, and the killing of princes and nobles to be no more thought of for several ages, than the shooting of so many rabbits.

On the one side was here arrayed the powerful house of Neville, which had now risen to a more surprising pitch of greatness than any other family in this country has ever done. It may, indeed, be regarded as the only family which, in the first great era of the English aristocracy, ever reached that point of overgrown eminence at which the whole class was aiming. It had, by daring enterprise and skilful alliance, collected within it estates immense enough to constitute a tolerable kingdom of themselves. Camden in one sentence has observed, that "from this house sprung six Earls of Westmoreland, two Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, an Earl of Kent, a Marquis of Montacute, a Baron Ferrers of Oversley, Barons Latimer, Barons Abergavenny, one Queen, five Duchesses, to omit Countesses and Baronesses, an Archbishop of York, and a great number of inferior gentlemen."

The sketch which Hume gives of this family at the opening of the reign of Henry VI., is one of the most striking in his whole history. "The family of Neville was, perhaps, at this time the most potent, both from their opulent possessions and from the character of the men, that has ever appeared in England. For, besides the Earl of Westmoreland, and the Lords Latimer, Fauconbridge, and Abergavenny, the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick were of that family, and were themselves, on many accounts, the greatest noblemen in the kingdom. The Earl of Salisbury, brother-in-law to the Duke of York, was the eldest son, by a second marriage, of the Earl of Westmoreland; and inherited, by his wife, daughter and heir of Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, killed before Orleans, the possessions and title of that great family. His eldest son, Richard, had married Anne, the daughter and heir of Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who died governor of France; and by this alliance he enjoyed the possessions and acquired the titles of that family, one of the most opulent, the most ancient, and most illustrious of England. The personal qualities also of these two earls, especially of Warwick, enhanced the splendour of their nobility, and increased their influence over the people. This latter nobleman, commonly known, however, from subsequent events, as the *king-maker*, had distinguished himself by his gallantry in the field, by the hospitality of his table, by the magnificence, and still more by the generosity of his expense, and by the spirit and bold manner which attended all his actions. The undesigned frankness and openness of his character, rendered his conquest over men's affections the more certain and infallible; his presents were regarded as sure testimonies of esteem and friendship, and his professions as the overflowings of his genuine sentiments. No less than 30,000 persons are said to have lived daily at his board, at the different manors and castles which he possessed in England. The military men, allured by his magnificence and hospitality, as well as by his bravery, were zealously attached to his interests; the people in general bore him an unlimited affection; his numerous retainers were more devoted to his will than the laws; and *he was the greatest as well as the last of those mighty barons who formerly overawed the crown, and rendered the people incapable of any regular system of civil government.*"

Yes! the aristocracy of the first period, the feudal aristocracy, had now reached its full-blown state, its highest point of culmination. It was a state in which its haughty and restless nature evidently left no chance of stability to the crown. There was but one step more—the planting itself on the throne—and this was the aim of Warwick by the means of marriage. Through

Anne, his second daughter, who became the wife of Richard III., he nearly succeeded. Had the throne of Richard III. stood firm, the descendants of the Nevilles would at this moment have worn the crown of England. But in this daring attempt, the Nevilles plunged both the families of York and Lancaster into ruin, and fell themselves overwhelmed in the great destruction; while the terror which the frightful apparition of overgrown aristocracy gave to the succeeding monarch, taught him with a steady and unsparing hand to lop off all aspiring heads, drain all over-proud purses, and thus to close the reign of aristocratic feudalism.

We shall not pursue all the gory windings, the ascents and descents of factions during this period, but merely note a few of the most striking events which contributed to weaken and pull down this vast fabric of aristocratic ambition.

Opposed to the Yorkists and Warwick was the queen, rather than the poor feeble-minded king; and Margaret had spirit enough to have propped her husband's throne, had her conduct been as unimpeachable as her heart was bold. But her blood-thirsty disposition completed the popular hatred which her shameless amours had begun. She had with her the Dukes of Somerset and Buckingham; the Earls of Northumberland, Devon, Pembroke, De Roos, Stafford, and Shrewsbury; Lords Clifford, Dacre, Beaumont, Egremont, Audley, Sudely, and many others. Of these, the greater part fell in the battles of St. Albans, Blore-heath, Northampton, Wakefield, Mortimer's-cross, Barnet, and others of those bloody and monstrous battles in which quarter was refused, and the contending parties seemed fired with a more than infernal animosity. The Earl of Warwick made it a standing rule to give no quarter to the nobles of the opposite party, and this lopping system, by which he hoped speedily to deprive the Lancastrians of leaders, was soon retaliated on him and his friends. His father, Salisbury, was taken after the battle of Wakefield, and beheaded at Pontefract. The Duke of York was killed in that battle, his second son, the Earl of Rutland, a boy of twelve or thirteen years old, was met on the bridge there, by Lord Clifford, and brutally murdered.

Warwick himself perished, with his brother, Lord Montacute, in the last horrible battle of Barnet, where Edward put in practice the bloody rule which he himself had taught him, of giving no quarter. Warwick fell, the just victim not merely of his reckless ambition, but of his implacable and sanguinary policy, little in accordance with the fine character which Hume has drawn of him. But, in the mean time, Warwick had set up Edward IV., and pulled him down again; had made Clarence a rebel against the king, his brother; had set up Henry VI., whom he had

before dethroned ; had entered into a league with Margaret, whom he had pursued for fifteen years, and who had pursued him with so much hatred that she had even sent his own father to the block ; had not only married his eldest daughter to Clarence, while Edward had no son, in the hope of Clarence thus succeeding to the throne, but had again agreed to come forward for the support of Henry VI., and married his second daughter to Prince Edward, the only son of Henry and Margaret, so as to secure to his posterity the throne on that side ; and, finally, fell fighting *against* Edward IV., for whom he had broken up the peace of the realm, cut off ruthlessly so many of the chief nobility, and such thousands of the people, and *for* the king whose throne he had overturned, whose life he had so thoroughly embittered, and on whom, and his only son, he eventually brought bloody murder, thus annihilating his line for ever.

A more striking instance of a man in whom a mad ambition had extinguished all the fine qualities of his original nature (if those qualities be justly ascribed to him), converting him into a fearful monster, to whose own self-aggrandisement kingdoms are but nine-pins, the lives and happiness of whole nations but as so many straws, and every principle of honour, justice, mercy, and faith, as old men's proverbs, is not to be found. But not only the personally daring schemes and deeds of Warwick and the whole Neville family, but the haughty assumption and the fearful rancour of the whole nobility became a sufficient warning to the nation and to posterity, never more to tolerate an aristocracy of so martial a character, to whose personal ambition it was evident that there was no aim too high, and no deed too desperate, and before which the whole kingdom must become an everlasting theatre of blood and violence, till its peace and energies were consumed together.

But the aristocratic ambition had, in fact, laid suicidal hands on itself. Besides the battles we have mentioned before the accession of Edward IV., there followed that accession the still bloodier ones of Towton, Hedgley Moor, Hexham, Edgecote, Erpingham, the second battle of Barnet, and Tewkesbury. In the battles and on the block during the long course of this contest, fell the Duke of York, his son Rutland, three successive Dukes of Somerset, the Dukes of Exeter and Buckingham, three Earls of Northumberland, the Earls of Salisbury, Devon, Wiltshire, Shrewsbury, Pembroke, Rivers, Warwick, Montacute, Worcester, Leeds, Audley, Beaumont, Egremont, Bonville, De Roos, Hungerford, Cromwell, Saye, Wenlock ; Sirs Kyriel, Grey, Woodville, Lisle, Audley, Rose, Clifton, Gainsby, Cary, Tresham, Owen Tudor, who are more particularly named,

besides a whole host of others; in the battle of Northampton alone, 300 knights and gentlemen falling; and six barons being beheaded with the Earl of Northumberland after the battle of Towton.

Of the people it is calculated that not less than 100,000 were sacrificed. In the battle of Towton alone fell 38,000; in the last bloody battle of Barnet 10,000; at Edgecote fell of the Yorkists alone 5000; in the first battle of Barnet 2000; and of the Lancastrians alone at St. Alban's 2000; at Mortimer's Cross 3600.

But besides, the private murderous crimes were numerous and most revolting. In the beginning of Henry VI.'s reign, his uncle the good Duke Humphry of Gloucester was privately murdered. King Henry was privately murdered as is believed by Edward IV., or by the hands of his brothers Clarence and Richard of Gloucester. Henry's only son Edward, a stripling, was stabbed in the presence of Edward IV., as again said, by Clarence and Gloucester, the latter murderer afterwards marrying the youth's widow, Anne, daughter of Warwick. As foully had Edward his own brother Clarence murdered in the Tower, according to tradition, drowning him in a butt of Malmsey. Scarcely was Edward himself dead, when his own brother, the infernal Gloucester, had his two sons—two innocent boys—smothered in that old slaughter-house the Tower.

The total destruction of all principle or sense of shame, however, in these nobility was most strikingly shown by the fact that after Richard of Gloucester had thus murdered his innocent nephews, and was suspected to be dyed to the very soul in secret blood, especially in that of Henry VI., there were found no lack of great supporters of his claim to the throne. The Duke of Buckingham urged on vehemently his usurpation, at the expense of the royal children, who were his own wife's nephews; and when he finally took the field against Henry of Monmouth, the Dukes of Northumberland and Norfolk, the Earls of Surrey, Ferrers, and Lovel, Sir Richard Ratcliffe, Sir Richard Brackenbury, and numerous others were seen at the head of his army. But the Duke of Buckingham had already deserted him; not, as it is asserted, out of any sense of propriety, or care who was the winner, but because his own insatiate desires were not gratified for his detestable treason to his innocent young sovereign, although he had been made Constable of the kingdom, Judiciary of Wales, Governor of all the royal castles in Wales, Steward of the royal manors in Herefordshire and Shropshire, and had received what had constantly been refused to him by King

Edward—the whole, or greater part of the immense inheritance of Humphrey de Bohun, which he claimed by right of descent.

But the whole survey of the court and the ranks of the nobility of those times afford the most revolting proofs of the horrible tendency of the struggles for what are called noble and royal honours. Take a passage immediately following the marriage of Edward IV. to Elizabeth Woodville, widow of Sir John Grey, and daughter of Jaquetta, Duchess of Bedford. The Yorkists, as usual, had been gratified with the estates of their fallen opponents.

“Up to this time Edward had left most of the offices and emoluments of government to the great family of the Nevilles, to whom he indisputably owed his crown. Warwick, the eldest brother, was chief minister, general, and admiral. He held besides the post of Warden of the West Marches, that of Chamberlain and Governor of Calais, the last the most profitable of all. The second brother, the Lord Montagu, after his victories of of Hedgley Moor and Hexham, had received the titles and forfeited estates of the Percies, Earls of Northumberland, and he had the wardenship of the East Marshes besides. The youngest brother, whom Edward had just made Bishop of Exeter, had received the seals as Chancellor on the 10th of March, 1461, six days after Edward's accession; and he had been very recently raised to the archiepiscopal see of York. Other members of the family had found most liberal provision out of the spoils and estates of the Lancastrian families, and while Edward had employed himself in the pursuit of pleasure, the Nevilles had their own way in the council. But now the Woodvilles, the Greys, all the relations and connections of the new Queen, rushed to the table with an enormous and indiscriminating appetite, every man, in right of consanguinity, seeking a title, an estate, a place, or a rich wife. The court had great influence in such matters; and as the fortunes of the family had taken a turn by an unexpected marriage, they seem to have determined to pursue the system, and actually contracted five or six profitable alliances in a very short time. In one of these matches they clashed with the Nevilles. Warwick had solicited the hand of the heiress of the Duke of Exeter for his own nephew, but by the supreme influence of Elizabeth, this young lady was contracted to Thomas Grey, her eldest son by her former marriage. The Nevilles were incensed at this measure, and other things trenching on their monopoly soon followed. The Queen's father, now created Earl Rivers, was made treasurer in place of their friend, Lord Mountjoy; and

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shortly after, the hitherto insignificant second husband of Jaquetta was made Lord High Constable in lieu of the Earl of Worcester. Other great families were irritated by the Queen absorbing five heirs of dukes or earls for her five unmarried sisters. For a time the history of this reign is nothing but a scandalous chronicle of match-making and match-breaking, and selfish family intrigues.*

But away with this scene, and take another. Edward dies. Richard of Gloucester, steeped in murder and bloodshed, even of his own kin, mounts the throne; and does it occasion any horror, or any revolting amongst the possessors of pure blood? Not the slightest. On the contrary, we read that "On the 6th of July he was crowned in Westminster Abbey with his wife, Anne, the daughter of Warwick. Neither lords spiritual nor lords temporal started the least difficulty; the Archbishop of Canterbury, with his clergy, anointed the usurper. There was a very full attendance of peers and peeresses; and while the Duke of Buckingham bore the train of the King, the Countess of Rutland did the like office for the Queen.†

This is an awful exhibition of human nature, but this is not the worst. Richard had not only murdered the sons of Elizabeth Woodville, the Queen of England, and thus destroyed all the hopes of a line of kings descending from her on the throne of England, but he had cut off the heads of her own brother, Earl Rivers, and her immediate relative, the Lord Gray; yet the next thing that we find is Richard proposing to get rid of Anne of Warwick, and to marry Elizabeth, the daughter of this queen-dowager, so as to strengthen his own title. The queen-dowager was already in treaty for a marriage of this daughter with Henry, Earl of Richmond, as the man who was destined to hurl down Gloucester, and ascend the throne; but, at once, she flings up this scheme, and eagerly embraces the offer of uniting her daughter to the murderer of her brothers and uncles! The daughter, worthy child of such a mother, jumps as eagerly at the proposition. She is placed about the person of the Queen, as if to watch her march out of the world. The Queen falls suddenly ill: such things can always occur when necessary in courts, and especially in a court like Richard's. It is quite calculated that she shall die, and in the mean time this amiable specimen of royalty, this child of a palace, this Elizabeth, the daughter of the luxurious, adulterous, and murderous Edward, and of the unscrupulous Elizabeth Woodville, writes to Howard, Duke of Norfolk, who is in high favour with the King, im-

* Knight's Hist. England.

† Sir Thomas More; Const. Hist. England; Knight's History.

ploring his good offices to forward this her marriage with Richard, whom she calls "her joy and maker in this world—the master of her heart and thoughts." She expresses her surprise that the Queen should be so long in dying. "The better part of February," she observes, "is past, and the Queen still alive—will she never die?"*

Anne died in March, and this impatient aspirant had already worn royal robes, and appeared at court balls and festivals as the particular object of the virtuous court's particular attentions, and was ready to mount the throne, when Richard took other counsel, and soon after finished his dark career on the field of Bosworth. What a sweet race of princes might have been expected from such a pair, had the union taken place: as it was, the "White Rose of England," as she was called, was reserved for Henry VII., and became the fitting mother of Henry VIII.

CHAPTER VIII.

"But the great element which was to act powerfully in the work of European civilization was the decline in England of the feudal aristocracy."

PICTORIAL HIST. OF ENGLAND.

THE blow was struck! With the accession of Henry VII. to the throne, the fate of the feudal aristocracy was sealed, and their first great era was closed;—the bulk of them, and the greatest of them had fallen in the wars of the Roses. Edward IV. took possession, at one time, of the confiscated estates of one hundred and forty of the principal nobility and gentry who had supported the rival family; Richard cut off a few more, and Henry, with untiring coolness, pursued the trimming and reducing system. The various impostors, which the unprecedented murders of his predecessors, and his own want of a good title to the throne, as well as his retention of the true heir male, Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Warwick, son of the Duke of Clarence, in the Tower, and the impressions which these things had left on the popular imagination, from time to time brought forward, afforded him frequent opportunities for beheading and confiscation. He first attainted thirty of the nobles and gentlemen who had supported Richard, amongst them the Duke of

* Pictorial History.

Norfolk and his son, the Earl of Surrey, Lords Lovel and Ferrers, and seized their estates. All grants made since the thirty-fourth of Henry IV. were resumed, and thus he obtained full power over the greater part of the property of the Yorkists, and removed them, or reduced them to full dependence on him, as he found most advisable. By the affair of Lambert Simnel, he got rid of Lord Lovel, and of the dangerous claimant on the throne, De la Pole, Earl of Lincoln, son of the sister of Edward IV. and Richard III. Perkin Warbeck helped him to get rid of Sir Simon Montford, Lord Audley, Sir Robert Ratcliffe, Sir William Daubeney, and Lord Fitzwalter; but more especially of Sir William Stanley, his own Lord Chamberlain, the richest subject in England, whom he contrived, in a deep-laid plot with the traitor Clifford, to impeach, to confiscate his property, and to behead him.

"See!

'Tis Stanley, Lord Great Chamberlain, 'tis he!
Whose tongue the senate, sword the battle sways,
Unmatched in both, since Clifford both betrays.
Hailed as St. Michael—militant and mild!
How grand, how gemmed—oh, Fortune's favourite child!"

But Henry, spite of his greatness, soon decoys him into his royal trap, the Tower.

"For—when events he feared, or planned, drew nigh,
Still in those walls that monarch loved to lie.
There, safe for him, barred others from support;
There held in gage his nobles, called to court;
There screened from sight, and yet secured arrests;
Here guests were captives, captives seemed but guests;
And barons, wont the distant law to mock,
Here learned obeisance to its bench and block."

And soon from this den of royal crimes Stanley walked forth to that block.

"Three suns sunk on him, and a fourth arose,
When reeves of London came with bills and bows,
With crape-bound banners, horns of muffled breath,
Low-wailing fifes, and drums intoning death;
And showed the manual sign and writ of fate,
Demanding Stanley at the western gate."

MOILE'S STATE TRIALS.

The last and most devoted of his victims was the unfortunate Earl of Warwick, whom he had kept all his life in the Tower to his twenty-ninth year. To destroy this last descendant of the

Plantagenets, his only possible competitor, he had recourse to the poor pretence that this youth, who was actually ignorant of the world and almost everybody in it, had conspired in the Tower with Perkin Warbeck to dethrone him. He was, says the historian, as innocent as a child when he was judicially murdered on Tower-hill by the king and the degraded peers of England. But though venal statesmen might applaud the deed, the uncorrupted people expressed such horror of the deed, as startled the wily king on his throne.* Henry, however, went on scraping up money, and thus increasing his power, till death carried off his cunning soul to another scene of action.

But if Henry VII. had laid the weight of his hand on the nobility in beheadings and confiscations, Henry VIII. laid the weight of his whole ponderous body upon them. The nobility, reduced to the feeblest condition by the wholesale destructions of the last five reigns; he himself enriched by these very means, and more especially by the cautious, grinding system of his father; the people yet passive, and glad enough to be freed from the consuming rage and lawlessness of the civil wars; and he himself being of a most sensual, domineering, vain, and desperate temperament;—all these circumstances conspired to render Henry VIII. one of the most absolute and bloody tyrants that ever lived. We will not pursue at much length his too well known story. He struck a terror into church, aristocracy, and people. It has been admirably said of him, "that he spared no man in his vengeance, nor woman in his lust." Of his six wives, two he divorced, and two he beheaded to make way for fresh ones. One escaped him by dying soon after child-birth; and one had a hair-breadth escape for her neck. Before the divorce of the first, he had actually married the second. On the morning of the execution of this second, the beautiful Anne Boleyn, whom he moved heaven and earth to obtain, he went to hunt in Epping Forest. As he sat at breakfast, he listened for the signal gun which should announce her death. On hearing it, he started up joyfully, exclaiming—"Ha! it is done! the business is done! Uncouple the dogs, and let us follow the sport." In the evening he returned gaily from the chase, and the next morning got married again.† This lady, Jane Seymour, died, as we have said, a natural death, and his next, Anne of Cleves, the unlucky Flanders mare, being a great horror to him, he tolerated but about four or five months, and took a fifth, Catherine Howard. As he could not enjoy the decapitation of Anne of Cleves, he celebrated his marriage with Catherine Howard by cutting off the

* Lord Bacon.

† Nott's Life of Surrey.

head of his minister, Cromwell, as well as that of Lord Hungerford, and burning alive three heretics, and hanging, drawing, and quartering three deniers of his supremacy—a very suitable mode of celebration of such a marriage by such a king. He wound up his honeymoon as characteristically with hanging the Prior of Doncaster, and six others, for defending the institution of the monastic life.

In one year he was tired of this wife, and within two years and a half from their marriage he had her head off, with that of Lady Rochford, at the same time. The marriage of his last wife, Catherine Parr, he may be said to have celebrated in his usual way; for Catherine being a good Protestant, during their honeymoon, that is only sixteen days after their wedding, he burnt there Protestants alive in Smithfield. He was a monarch of so lusty a humour, that he did not fancy himself properly married without he amused his people with the falling head of a wife, a minister, or with the flames and cries of a few heretics. This exemplary husband never wanted a candidate for the vacant wifeship. As if the ladies were in love with divorcing and beheading, we read of but one who declined the proffered honour of matrimonial martyrdom. This was a witty Duchess Dowager of Milan, who replied, "that she, unfortunately, had but one head, and could not afford to lose it." But what will not man or woman do or risk for royalty?

Such were the pleasant matrimonial humours of this monarch. His nobles, unlike those proud, iron men who made his predecessors tremble or fall before them, crouched before him like beaten hounds. He began his bloody work upon them in the very commencement of his reign, by cutting off the head of the Duke of Suffolk in the Tower, a legacy left him by his father, who, in his very last moments, signed an order for this execution. His next victim was the Duke of Buckingham, the son of that duke whose head Richard III. had taken off. This nobleman had two mortal faults in Henry's eyes: he was a direct descendant of Edward III., and he was one of the richest men in England. But besides this, he had made an equally dangerous enemy, Wolsey, whose pride he had hurt by contemptuously pouring the water into his shoes, which he, Buckingham, held for the king, and into which Wolsey also made free to dip his fingers. Wolsey vowed to "sit on his skirt." Next fell Bishop Fisher and the learned and witty Sir Thomas More. Then with his wife, Anne Boleyn, he beheaded Lord Rochford, and four gentlemen, Norris, Weston, Brereton, and Smeaton, for Henry generally immolated a whole troop with one of his wives. But, observes the historian, "Henry had no monopoly of crime. The

highest names amongst the nobility were servilely officious to do all his pleasure for him. On this occasion, the Duke of Norfolk, Anne's uncle, and the Duke of Suffolk, with the principal peers, judged and condemned her and the other victims;—the nobility were becoming worthy of the king.* Then fell the Lords Darcey and Hussey, Robert Aske, and others, for participation in the Pilgrimage of Grace, which Henry's church plunder had excited. In 1538 he fell upon Lord Montacute, the Marquis of Exeter, and Sir Edward Neville, and beheaded them with some meaner victims. Lord Herbert, the best informed of contemporary writers, says he never could discover the particular offences of these great people. The cause, in fact, was the royal blood in their veins, and their relation to or connection with Cardinal Pole, who published Henry's infamous proceedings all over Europe. Soon after he followed up his vengeance by seizing and beheading Sir Andrew Fortescue, Sir Thomas Dingley, and the Countess of Salisbury, the mother of Cardinal Pole. This lady was, however, confined two years, and then executed; the knights were dispatched immediately. The old countess, seventy years of age, had a spirit equal to that of her son, the cardinal. She refused to lay her head on the block, saying that her head had never committed treason, and if they had it they must take it. The executioner tried to seize her, but she moved swiftly round the scaffold, tossing her head from side to side. At last, when her grey hairs were covered with blood—for they struck her with their weapons—she was held forcibly down, and the axe severed her neck.† She was the king's very next relation. But this did not satisfy Henry. He thirsted for the blood of the Marchioness of Exeter, whose husband he had already beheaded; but his ministers could find no shadow of an excuse for examining her. Cromwell asked the judges if the parliament could not condemn persons accused of treason without trial or confession, and these servile wretches, who had already declared, when asked by Wolsey, that government could take the people's money without act of parliament, answered, that though the case was peculiar, yet parliament was supreme, and any bill of attainder passed by parliament would be good in law. Such a bill the base parliament actually passed, condemning all those parties without any form of trial whatever; but the Marchioness of Exeter they dared not, after all, put to death.

Before the venerable Countess of Salisbury fell, had fallen Cromwell, one of the king's most wholesale and unscrupulous

* Stow; Hall; Godwin; Ellis's Original Letters.

† Pole's Epistles; Hall; Godwin; Ellis's Letters; Holt Papers.

tools. He had asked the judges if subjects could not be condemned without trial; and he met with the most poetical justice, in being himself condemned by bill of attainder, without trial, though he cried lustily for it. He cried also piteously for "Mercy! mercy!" but he had shown none, and he found none.*

When Catherine Howard fell, other victims fell with her, and the most shameful, secret, and unconstitutional proceedings, the racking and bribery of servants, were employed against her relations, to draw out charges against her. Her great aunt, the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk, the widow of the hero of Flodden, with the duchess' son, Lord William Howard, his wife, and his sister, Lady Bridgewater, were subjected to the most detestable insults and degradations, in which Archbishop Cranmer showed himself very forward, and were condemned to perpetual imprisonment. Lesser personages were put to death. But the most disgusting sight was to see the highest nobility acting the most servile part of spies, inquisitors, and venal slaves in the matter—even the nearest of blood to the parties to be victimised. "No man," says the author of the Pictorial History, "had the spirit to recommend a more legal way of proceeding; none dared to open their lips in favour of the accused. The nearest of blood sought favour with the court, by crying for their condemnation. No humiliation was too vile for the loftiest aristocracy of the land. A day or two after their commitment to the Tower, the Duke of Norfolk went to the king, telling him, "that he had learned that his ungracious mother-in-law, his unhappy brother and wife, and his *lewd* sister of Bridgewater, are in the Tower; which, he says, from his long experience of his majesty's *equity and justice*, he feels sure is not done but for false and traitorous proceedings." He went on in the most fulsome strain. This mighty lord had urged on the ruin of his niece, Anne Boleyn, and presided at her trial; he now condemned his other niece, Catherine Howard, just as he had done Anne. "There are," adds the historian, "sundry points of these affairs, that we would not venture to assert on any authority less positive than the *State Papers*, where we find the king's letters and orders; Cranmer's letters; the letters of the council, &c., written at the moment."

The bolt of retribution did not miss this base duke. He was next clapped into the Tower with his gallant son, Lord Surrey. The upstart family of Seymour, the relations of Queen Jane Seymour, and of the heir to the throne, Prince Edward, wanted Norfolk and his son out of the way; and resolved to destroy them. The family of Norfolk, in its unnatural divisions, was

* Strype; Herbert; Le Grand; Journals.

but too open to such an attack. The duchess was on the worst terms with her husband, living apart from him; the daughter, the Duchess of Richmond, had a hatred of her own brother, Surrey. These women and servants again were tampered with to get up a charge. Surrey, the brave poet, fell the last victim of the tyrant. "And so," says Godwin, "the flower of the English nobility was, on the 19th of January, beheaded; the king being then in extremity, and breathing his *last in blood*." Norfolk, the father, escaped by his examination being ordered for the next morning, and the king dying in the night. His enemies, the Seymours, urged on the signing of the warrant, having got a promise of all his estates; but it was too late: he was rescued from a life of imprisonment with the gnawing vipers of a bad conscience, and the detestation of his family, till the reign of Queen Mary.

Such was the great Blue Beard of our history. He had laid about him, and spared not. He divorced and cut off not wives only, but he divorced the Church of England from the Church of Rome, and cut off its head, the Pope, and set upon it his own. He spared not the ablest or the best of men. He certainly had a glorious development of the organ of destructiveness. His great ministers fell before his death—word the same as the basest subject. More, the learned, the wit, the admiration of all Europe; Cromwell, the stern fulfiller of his will, died in their blood. Wolsey, the mighty creation of his own hand, died the worst species of execution, a crushed heart, in the ruthless vengeance of his master. The nobles who fell on the scaffold were but a small portion of his victims. The fires of Smithfield and the gallows dispatched so many, that a modern historian thus winds up his account of this reign. "The most fitting conclusion of the life and reign of Henry VIII. is to state, that between his accession and his death, *some thousands of individuals* were executed. If in this narrative, our views of certain historical characters and their motives of action be found to vary somewhat from those of preceding writers, the reader should bear in mind that these views have been opened to us, and illuminated by the unerring light of the STATE PAPERS."*

These state papers have certainly opened up awful secrets of the proceedings not only of this, but of succeeding reigns. We learn with pain from them, that Henry was not only busy with murders at home, but that he had his agents in Scotland promoting the murder of Cardinal Beatoun, and others that were inimical to his views in that country. That Norman Leslie,

* Knight's Hist. England.

and the other murderers of the cardinal were all the hired assassins of Henry. That Wishart, the reformer, and so long honoured as a martyr, was his hired agent and spy, and that that man, whose name once appeared so respectable, Sir Ralph Saddler, was the unscrupulous manager of these commissions of murder, as he was afterwards in the reign of Elizabeth.*

But to confine ourselves to his proceedings at home. He had broken up the monasteries, and seized on an immense mass of wealth, enough to have made the crown for ever independent of parliamentary grants; and what did he do with this? Did he build colleges and schools with it? Did he make provision for the poor whom he had thus deprived of their great revenue? Did he apply it to alleviate taxation? No; he devoted it to no one useful purpose. The monks and all those that they fed, now turned out to begging; till the country swarmed with mendicants and robbers, and rebellion broke out. The complaints of the people on those heads, he answered in the language of a savage. The people of Lincolnshire he addressed thus:—"How presumptuous are ye, the rude commons, and of one shire, and that one of the most brute and beastly of the whole realm, and of least experience, to find fault with your prince for the electing of his counsellors and prelates; and to take upon you, contrary to God's laws, and men's laws, to rule your prince, whom you are bound by all laws to obey and serve with both your lives, lands, and goods, and for no worldly cause to withstand; the contrary whereof you, like traitors and rebels, have attempted, and not like true subjects, as ye name yourselves."†

In fact, Henry had suffered the whole of the property taken from the church to be rioted and lavished away, or seized on by the host of cormorants which surrounded him, and rose into a new mushroom nobility out of this national plunder. So completely was all this astounding mass of property thus embezzled, as we may say, by the courtiers and their vile agents, that the wretched king was compelled to exact money from his subjects by the most grievous and lawless means, and even had the impudence to demand from parliament *a compensation for the expenses he had incurred in reforming the religion of the state*; and within a year after he had completed his measure, the slavish parliament voted him a subsidy of two-tenths and two-fifteenths for this express purpose.

But, besides the enormous wealth clutched by courtiers and parasites, a vast amount, and of a still more valuable kind was

* See State Papers, especially Saddler's Papers; Tytler's Hist. Scotland.

† State Papers: Hall.

destroyed for ever. The glorious painted windows of the churches; paintings and beautiful statues, many of them the productions of the greatest masters, were demolished; the finest specimens of architecture were defaced and ruined; and the grand old libraries, one of which was to be found in each religious house, were squandered and destroyed in the vilest purposes. All that tended to refine the taste and diffuse intelligence, was crushed by the rascal rabble which did the work of interested courtiers. Copies of the classics and other MSS. vanished, never to be replaced. The bells were gambled for, and sold into Russia and other countries. But the books!—how does our indignation rise at their fate! "Some," says Sir Henry Spelman, an eye-witness, "were reserved to scour their candlesticks, some to rub their boots; some sold to the grocers and soap-boilers, and some sent over sea to bookbinders, not in small numbers, but at times whole shipful, to the wondering of foreign nations; a single merchant purchasing at forty shillings apiece, two noble libraries, to be used as gray paper, and such as having sufficed for ten years, were abundant enough for many years more."*

Pauperism was diffused all over the kingdom, for the grand resources of the poor were annihilated; and ignorance advanced at an equal rate; for the schools in the monasteries were at an end, and no others were substituted. The means of higher education was so diminished, that Latimer said, some years afterwards, "I think there be at this day ten thousand students less than there were within these twenty years."

Such were the fatal doings of this absolute and brutal butcher of a king. The people, but recently released from the domination of a feudal aristocracy, were for a time paralysed by the furious rage of this monster. The nation, however, in after years looked back, and contemplated this reign, and saw in it an example of the madness of monarchy as fearful as that of aristocracy, and as carefully to be guarded against by the safeguards of the constitution, and the assertion of its own and only true sovereign power.

The picture of the Bluff Harry, in his last year, is a fine example of what a loathsome piece of carrion pure blood may become. "The most wretched being in this wretched state of things was the king himself, whose mind and body were alike diseased. In the absence of other pleasures, he had given himself up to immoderate eating; and he had grown so enormously fat, that he could not pass through an ordinary door, nor could he

* Hist. and Fate of Sacrilege; Blunt's Sketches of the Reformation.

move about from room to room without the help of machinery, or of numerous attendants. The old issue in his leg had become an inveterate ulcer, which kept him in a constant state of pain and excessive irritability. It was alike offensive to the senses, and dangerous alike to life and property to approach this corrupted mass of dying tyranny. The slightest thing displeased him, and his displeasure was a fury and a madness; and nothing on earth could give him a wholesome, agreeable feeling. How his last wife, Catherine Parr, escaped destruction, appears almost marvellous; she was more than once in imminent peril. The court, which no longer exhibited any of the pageants and gaieties of earlier days, had become a gloomy conventicle, where men, and women too, gave themselves up to the study of polemics.*

Yet this bloated load of corrupted carrion could, in its poisonous and fetid vileness, seal the doom of genius and valour, and make its last earthly act the destruction of a Surrey.

The historians we have quoted above, contemplating the enactments of Henry VIII., say well:—"The temper of such a legislator as Henry, and the thoroughly submissive, the otherwise incredible cowardice and baseness of his parliament, can only be fully exhibited by enumeration of their penal laws; which for number, variety, severity, and inconsistency, are perhaps unequalled in the annals of jurisprudence. Instead of the calmness, the foresight, the wisdom, which are looked for in a legislature, we find the wild fantasies and ever-changing, though ever-selfish, caprices of a spoiled child, joined to the blind, furious, malignant passions of a brutal and cruel savage. It would seem as if the disembodied demon of a Caligula or a Nero, the evil spirit that once wore their human form, had again become incarnate upon earth, let loose by the Omnipotent for some wise, though to dull, mortal eyes, dimly discerned end, to repeat in a distant age and another clime, that strange, wild, extravagant medley of buffoonery and horror which is fitted to move at once the laughter and execration of mankind!"

* Lord Herbert; Knight's History.

CHAPTER IX.

EDWARD VI. presented again the ominous spectacle and prospect of a boy on the throne; and spite of all the praises and wonder of historians over the abilities and virtues of this boy, it is more than probable that, had he lived, he would have furnished another instance of the truth of the Scripture declaration—"Woe unto those nations whose princes are children!"

There is something so unnatural in royalty, or in the way in which it is treated, that old heads and full-grown and stout hearts cannot withstand its corrupting and destroying influences; but when a child is set on a throne, it is a certain augury of weakness and despotism in him, and of calamity to his people. He is surrounded by such desperate men, and desperate intrigues, by such furious factions and passions, that he is inevitably ruined. He is alternately worshipped as a god, and restrained as a captive; an instrument for the base purposes of those about him; till his mind is lifted from its balance, his temper is irritated, his passions inflamed, his affections irregularly developed, and he becomes the most melancholy object that the world has to show—a mingled mass of vanity and selfishness, weakness and irritability, depraved tastes and heartless tyranny; having lost all good in him, yet thinking nothing good enough for him; fit for neither heaven nor earth; in the midst of cruelty languishing for indulgence; in his person a most loathsome carcase; in his imagination a god! Such monsters are the regular work of royal minorities, regencies, courtiers, and parasites; all history abounds with examples of them. Edward was more blessed; he was one of those "who are loved of the gods, and die young."

But in his own short reign the nobles had time enough to show themselves in their true characters: to show what they would have made of him, of themselves, and the nation. Low as they had cowered before the two Henrys, so high in proportion started up their lawless vanity and ambition, when their fear was taken away from them, and they had only a boy to deal with.

This reign, in fact, is a point of time on which every man desirous of satisfying himself of the real and eternal nature of aristocracy, and of the actual origin and manufacture of some of the proudest of our present families, should steadily fix his eye. Here we have all the old intrigues, rapacity, and boundless

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vanity of the aristocrats again in play. Spite of the lopping and levelling of the last reigns, a swarm of adventurers and gamblers for rank and affluence stood as thickly and as busily as ever round the throne. What was worse, they were new men,—hungry, and without law or conscience. The old oaks were felled, and here was a prodigious growth of fungus shot up from their stumps and stools. The nation had got rid of its lions, and had got wolves and leeches in their places. The estates wrested by the crown both from the fallen nobles and the church, and suffered by the bloated hands of Henry VIII. to be snatched away from it, were now pounced upon by a crowd of hitherto unknown men. All these, the moment they became possessed of a good share of this booty, were seized with an equally ravenous desire for titles and power. We find a complete catalogue of strange names, and even where we find the old titles, there are no longer the old men in them, but dull and creeping things; asses in lions' skins; toads and salamanders, which had crept into the deserted shells of tortoises, and swelled with vanity to fill out, if possible, the space too wide for their reptile littleness. Amongst the men surrounding the death-bed of Henry, or forming the first council of Edward, were Browns, Dennys, Bromleys, Wingfields, Petres, Southwells, Parrs, Peckhams, Pagets, Dudleys, Bakers, Saddlers, and such like, all unknown to the old history and glory of the country. There was Wriothesley, who had grown up by vile sycophancy under Henry; and by laying what the historian calls his bestial hands on any vile job which the tyrant wanted doing, had gorged himself with church and other spoil, and grown to Lord Chancellor. There was John Russell, who appeared under Henry for the first time in any prominent history; had crept and wound himself by a most pliable sequacity, and now stood Baron Russell, Lord Privy Seal. This is the origin of the greatness of the Bedford family; for this John Russell managed to lay hold of an enormous slice of church property, and to be made Earl of Bedford; as many of these men were made during Edward's minority, in fact, by themselves, into nobles and great ministers. But above all, the two families destined to play the grand nobles in this reign, the Dudleys and Seymours, were the most complete upstarts, and played "the most fantastic tricks before high heaven;" nothing less than the crown being able to satisfy their ambition. The whole of the proceedings of this reign constitute a most admirable tragi-comedy, showing what aristocracy is and always will be when it can have full swing.

Scarcely was the breath out of Henry's body when the grand

farce began. Seymour, whose sister had been one of the king's wives, and had thus raised the family out of its insignificance, had already been manufactured into Earl of Hertford, and had been long at work preparing for his possession of the child-king, his nephew. He and his adherents, the wily John Russell, Wriothesley, Paget, Denny, Herbert, &c., had contrived that a clause should appear in the king's will ordering all his promises to be made good. These courtiers then came forward and declared that the king had ordered that out of the estate of the Duke of Norfolk, then under sentence of death, the secretary should "tot down to the Earl of Hertford 1000 marks, to the Lords Lisle (Dudley), St. John, and Russell, 200*l.* a year, to Lord Wriothesley 100*l.*, to Sir Thomas Seymour 300*l.* a year, to Denny 100*l.*, and to Sir William Herbert 400 marks. Then the Earl of Hertford was to be Earl Marshal, and Lord Treasurer, and to be Duke of Somerset, Exeter, or Hertford, and his son the Earl of Wiltshire, with 800*l.* a year of land, and 200*l.* a year out of the next bishop's lands that fell void. The Earl of Essex was to be Marquis of Exeter, the Viscount Lisle to be Earl of Coventry, the Earl Wriothesley to be Earl of Winchester, Sir Thomas Seymour to be a Baron and Lord Admiral, Sir Richard Rich, Sir John St. Leger, Sir William Willoughby, Sir Edward Sheffield, and Sir Christopher Danby to be Barons, with yearly revenues to them and several other persons. That the king, at the request of Sir Edward North, promised Hertford six of the best prebends that should fall in any cathedral, except deaneries and treasurerships; but at Hertford's request changed two of the six prebendaries into a deanery and treasurership! Herbert then told the king that Denny, who had noted all this down, had forgotten himself, and the king ordered Denny 400*l.* a year for himself!

Thus it was truly "caw me, caw thee." The whole of this is most rich. Here was a set of fellows trumping up a story to help themselves to the lands and the highest titles of England. There was no evidence in the world for all this, except what rested on their own testimony; *i. e.*, on a will of the king which they produced, and which did not agree in date with their own story; and yet on this swindling pretence—for who was to hinder them with the king's uncle at their head?—they actually loaded themselves with estates and titles; they, in a word, manufactured themselves into nobles. In this manner was founded a whole batch of families that now lift their heads amongst the very proudest and wealthiest of England! The frogs were now busily blowing themselves out to become as big as bullocks; and

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in fact, like the frogs in the fable, those who swelled the most eventually burst.* They had given themselves great estates, but for a while they did not know where to find them; eventually they laid hold of the chantry lands. The titles with which these men finally adorned themselves were—Essex, made Marquis of Northampton; Lisle, Earl of Warwick; Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton; Sir Thomas Seymour, Baron Seymour of Sudley and Lord High Admiral; Rich, Baron Rich; Willoughby, Baron Willoughby; Sheffield, Baron Sheffield; St. Leger and Danby, with a rare moderation, crept out of the dirty business, and declined both peerage and pension. As for Hertford, says his admirer, Strype, "he grew an exceeding great man swelling with titles." This was his style—"The Most High, Noble and Victorious Prince Edward, Duke of Somerset, Earl of Hertford, Viscount Beauchamp, Lord Seymour, Guardian of the Person of the King's Majesty and Protector of all his realms, his Lieutenant General of all his armies both by land and sea, Lord High Treasurer and Earl Marshal of England, Governor of the Isles of Guernsey and Jersey, and Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter"!!!!

But it was not with all these sounding titles that he stopped. His creatures, Russell, Brown, Paget, Cheyney, Northampton, and that miserable coward and creeping slave and persecutor, Cranmer, by a commission signed in the king's name, made him governor of the king and kingdom, without any participation of the council, so that he was, in fact, absolute master of the king and the realm. He went on granting himself fresh estates in the name of the king, who was a prisoner in his hands; and at length styled himself, "Duke of Somerset *by the grace of God!*" as if he had been a sovereign prince. His rapacity, his arrogance, his puffed up vanity, became so disgusting, ludicrous, and overbearing, that he was regarded on all hands as a vain and insolent upstart. Burnet confesses that "many bishops and cathedrals had resigned many manors to him for obtaining his favour." He sold, or rather gave away, quantities of the chantry lands to his tools; and when he had sunk the kingdom to the lowest point of disgrace by his miserable campaigns in Scotland, and into universal confusion and insurrection at home, he proceeded to build himself a magnificent palace in the Strand, on the site of the present Somerset-house, for which purpose he compelled three bishops to surrender to him their episcopal mansions, which he levelled to the ground. He threw down also a parish church which stood in his way, with various other religious buildings,

* Strype's Ecclesiastical Memorials; Burnet; Lingard.

for the sake of the materials; destroyed the monuments of the dead in them, and scattered the bones of the dead themselves, flinging them by cart-loads into a pit in Bloomsbury.

But this man was but one actor in the play. His brother, Sir Thomas Seymour, now Baron Seymour and Lord High Admiral, looked with envious eyes on Somerset's greatness, and resolved to equal or surpass him. For this purpose he married the Queen Dowager, Catherine Parr, began bribing right and left, even giving money to the poor boy, the king, who seemed always very glad of it. He got the Princess Elizabeth into his hands; and in the Burghley Papers, published in 1740 and 1759, there are some very curious passages respecting his conduct to Elizabeth, such as his tickling her in bed, going into her bedroom in the night, &c. &c.; which, when an examination came to be made into these matters, put Elizabeth into a terrible fright, especially the confessions of her governess, Mrs Catherine Ashley. After his wife's death he wanted to marry Elizabeth. He planned to get the king into his own hands, and carry him to his castle of Holt, in Denbighshire, but his career was stopped by his brother, who caused him to be brought before the council, and was the first to set his hand to his death-warrant. He was executed on Tower-hill. Thus Somerset had got rid of his brother, but, as in all such companies of upstarts, there were plenty of enemies still left behind. He had early thrown Wriothesley out of office, and done his best to ruin him; and revenge was not wanting, but more than revenge, ambition as daring as his own was at work. Warwick was as eager to play the hero, and lay hold of the power of the Crown, and of the Crown itself, as Somerset or his brother. With the counsels of the disgraced and wily Wriothesley to guide him, he made a dead set at Somerset, raised a party against him, brought him before the council, and humiliated him to the dust. He then raised him again, and plotted with him as a tool, till finally he struck his blow; and the poor, vain-glorious duke, after being paraded through London on horseback, was conveyed to the Tower, and had his head struck off on the very spot where he had caused that of his brother to fall! His whole government had, in truth, been wretched and ruinous. His wars in Scotland and France had been a series of losses and national disgraces. His domestic transactions had been one course of blundering and irritating mischief. The whole kingdom had been thrown into a flame; in every quarter of it the people were driven to rebellion. In Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Gloucester, Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Essex, Hants, Suffolk, Wilts, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire; in fact, in every part, the people had been in arms and

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committing devastations, but especially in Norfolk, where 1600 men, with the notorious Ket at their head, were not put down without a fierce resistance and a terrible slaughter. These things were all favourable to the designs of Warwick; and from the moment of Somerset's disgrace, Warwick, like a true aristocratic balloon, began to fill with the gas of soaring ambition, and to aim at the same fatal altitude of dominion. He was speedily metamorphosed into Great Master of the Household, Lord High Admiral; and his helps, Russell and St. John, were turned into Earls of Bedford and Wiltshire. Warwick then became Warden of the Scottish Marches, and finally Duke of Northumberland; his supporters being again disguised in the new names of Duke of Suffolk, Marquis of Winchester, Earl of Pembroke, &c.

Northumberland had now got the king and power into his hand, but the health of Edward began to decline, and that decline was the rise of a new and vast dream of ambition in Northumberland, no less than that of fixing his family on the throne by marrying his son, Lord Guildford Dudley, to Lady Jane Grey, the next heir to the crown after Edward's two sisters. He then proceeded to the daring design to set aside the two princesses. This he actually managed by his influence over the enfeebled mind of the dying boy-king, Edward, on the pleas of Mary's bigotry, and of the illegitimacy of them both, which, in truth, their own brutal father had virtually declared in his pleas for putting away their mothers. He forced, by violence, this marriage on the council, and did not stop till his audacious and profligate attempt had brought to the block his sons, Lord Guildford Dudley and Lord Robert Dudley, the amiable and innocent Lady Jane Grey herself, Sir Thomas Palmer, Sir John Gates, the Duke of Suffolk, Lord Thomas Grey, his brother, and others.

And who was this towering Duke of Northumberland? Let the reader turn to the reign of Henry VII., and he will find his father figuring away as one of the vilest tools of that avaricious king. Henry, he will find, had two agents, whose business it was to extort money from the king's subjects: these were two scoundrel lawyers, Empson and Dudley. Lord Bacon says,—“As kings do more easily find instruments for their will and humour than for their service and honour, he had gotten for his purpose these two instruments, whom the people esteemed as his horse-leeches and sheerers, bold men and careless of fame, and that took toll of their master's grist;—nay, turned law and justice into wormwood and rapine. They charged the owners of estates which long had been held on a different tenure, with the obsolete burdens of wardships, liveries, premier seisins, and

the whole array of feudal obligations, for which they would only give quittances for payments in money: they not only converted every offence into a case of fine and profit, but invented new offences to get the fines: to hunt up their game, they kept packs of spies and informers in every part of the kingdom, and to strike it down with the legal forms, they kept a rabble to sit on juries. At length, they did not observe so much as the half-face of justice. They arrested men by precept, and tried them without any jury in their own private houses. These and other courses, fitter to be buried than repeated, they had of preying upon the people, both like tame hawks, for their master, and like wild hawks for themselves, insomuch that they grew to great riches and substance."

The people were worked up to madness by these villanies, and one of the very first acts of Henry VIII. was to appease them by arresting these arch rogues, and, after a year's imprisonment in the Tower, striking off their heads.

Such is the material out of which nobility is continually made. This knave of a lawyer and extortioner had his head taken off, but the people's property, which he had embezzled, remained in the family, and enabled the son to rise to the very height of the crown, and to stretch out his hand to seize it. He again fell, and many of his family with him, yet we find his grandson, Robert Dudley, by his handsome exterior, captivating Queen Elizabeth, and made Earl of Leicester. When we read of the unprincipled deeds of Leicester, of the atrocious murder of his wife, and of other acts which deserved the halter, we have only to remember old Dudley the extortioner, and his conduct appears quite in keeping with his origin.

CHAPTER X.

WE may pass over the reign of Mary, which was only distinguished by its burnings and bigotry, and in which the nobility were scarcely noticeable except for their servility, and contemplate that of her more remarkable sister, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth has been long lauded to the skies as a great princess. "The glorious Queen Bess" has, like the glorious constitution, been represented by Tory writers as the envy and admiration of the world. We have been taught to regard her as one of the most patriotic of rulers, and as an incontestable benefactor of

the country. It has been said that our present Queen was studiously and assiduously educated on the model of Elizabeth. Heaven forbid! A worse woman surely never existed, nor one whose principles and practices were more thoroughly un-English. She was a murderess, and a destroyer of the people's rights and free-will of the worst and most implacable dye. Her cold-blooded ministers and herself were engaged the whole of their lives, after she mounted the throne, in practices and a policy most hateful to every true English mind, most hostile to every English principle of action, to all English honour and high-heartedness, most detestable for their Machiavellian, dark, clandestine, Inquisition-like, assassin-like, and remorseless character. The longer and the more accurately our history has been studied, the more widely sentiments of true greatness and just ideas of government and freedom have prevailed, the lower has sunk the character of Elizabeth. Of late years, a free search amongst the original documents of the State-paper Office has brought to light such evidence, under the hands of Elizabeth's own ministers, of the real transactions and principles of administration of her reign, as must set for ever the most damning blackness on her character, and on that of her confidential advisers. There is no man who is able to free himself from educational prejudices, and to regard these revelations as a man and a Christian, who can contemplate them without the most unqualified abhorrence.

That Elizabeth was an able woman, and that she was surrounded by able men, is an unquestionable fact. But how did she and they employ this ability? That is the question. In great and generous actions—in promoting the happiness of all those with whom they stood in connexion—in preferring truth and honour to stratagem and deceit—magnanimity and promotion of the common good to petty jealousy and base passions? These are the principles of true greatness, and the foundations of true glory, and for these we seek in vain in Elizabeth or her counsellors. They must, indeed, have strange and perverted ideas of what glory and greatness are, that find them in her policy. Escaped from the glare of false splendours, which our former historians, quoting the false documents of a paid press, have flung round our school-day fancies—from the cries of "Glorious Queen Bess," which Tories, true to their own views, have deceived us with—we look for the woman and the deeds which they have lauded, and what do we find? A woman of undoubted ability, though overrun with the most ludicrous vanity and the most childish weaknesses—a woman of a most masculine will and despotic disposition—daring, selfish, cunning,

and artful as a serpent, but with the serpent's venom and the tiger's cruelty—a true Henry VIII. in petticoats. And what did she for the country? Ruled it in peace, and maintained the Protestant religion. Henry did that too; but will any one call that monster a glorious monarch? He maintained peace, and Protestantism, and persecution; and she maintained peace and Protestantism, because they were both knowing, selfish, and strong-willed people, who knew what was agreeable to themselves and how far they might go, and who would have maintained anything put into their heads, out of pride and love of power; but who loved themselves far better than their own people, and stuck at nothing that they deemed conducive to their domination, were it as black as the blackest spot in the heart of Satan.

The defeat of the Armada, and Elizabeth's conduct on that occasion, have been made the subject of much childish admiration. We shall come to speak of these presently; but her persecutions and tauntings of all who resisted her will in government or religion—her violations of all the liberties and sacred rights of the subject—her repugnance to education and her most contemptible ideas of religious tolerance—her fanaticism and monopolies—have been less touched upon. She is, in truth, a character at which every true-hearted Englishman must shudder.

What is of the highest importance in judging of her reign, is to bring clearly before our view the base, subservient disposition of her nobility, who seconded the very worst of her actions—those which have cast a vile stain on that period of our history; and the not less striking fact that the people, who really again fought out the true glory of this reign, have never even won the slightest whisper of the credit of it. Sycophants and parasites have stolen their honours to hang them on the brows of exalted malefactors.

The great drama of Elizabeth's life and reign is based on that deadly hate with which the beauty and popularity of her cousin, the Queen of Scots, inspired her; and on that subtle, never-pausing, and successfully murderous series of schemes, plots, bribes, hiring of assassins, and forgery of evidence, suborning of false and perjured accusers, and forced submissions to servile judges, by which, from the first moment of her reign to that of the shedding of Mary's blood, she never ceased to pursue her. And here it must be recollected that there is no room for surmises; the whole train of dark transactions is now dragged to the day, and stands in the front of our history, and on the testimony of the actors themselves, in our archives. On the authority of these evidences, a modern historian says:—"In a fatal

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moment, Mary and her husband quartered the royal arms of England with their own, and even assumed the style of king and queen of England and Scotland. She resolved to anticipate events ; to undermine the authority of Mary in the neighbouring kingdom, so as to leave her neither a Scottish nor an English throne ; and this plan was acted upon through a long series of years, with consummate and wonderful art."*

In fact, Mary's title to the English throne was, so far as it depended on strictly legitimate blood, much better than Elizabeth's. As we have seen, the marriage of Henry with Anne Boleyn took place four months before the marriage with Catherine of Arragon was dissolved. It was, therefore, no marriage ; Elizabeth was illegitimate ; had been so declared by her own father, and the attainder of Elizabeth's blood had never been reversed by her own parliament. In fact, the question was too delicate for Elizabeth to meddle with, and she had carefully passed it over. Her own defect in this respect, joined to the better claim and the beauty of Mary, were things never to be forgiven by her implacable heart.

When Elizabeth mounted the throne, Henry II. of France was alive. Mary of Scotland was married to his eldest son. It was only on the decease of the old king, and the accession of Francis II. and Mary that, as we learn from a letter of Cecil to Ralph Sadder, the young sovereigns had on a new seal quartered the arms of England. But before this Elizabeth had commenced her secret proceedings against the peace of Mary, had given encouragement to her revolted Scotch subjects, and at the time that Cecil wrote, Sadder was actually at Berwick, on the Scottish borders, busy dealing out Elizabeth's money to Mary's subjects in her absence, and exciting them to insurrection. Not only was Sadder on the borders, but Randal, Elizabeth's agent under a false name, that of Barnyby, was in the country, and in close communication with the Protestant lords who had combined against the agency of Mary's mother, Mary of Guise, and called themselves the Congregation of the Lord. These lords, commonly known as the Lords of the Congregation, were eager to receive English pay, great names as they bore, such as the Earls of Argyle, Montrose, Glencairn, and Arran, called also Duke of Chatelherault, Lord Lorn, the Prior of St. Andrew's, Mary's illegitimate brother, &c.* We find Sadder paying them 2000*l.* at once,† telling them, that if they made a good use of it, and kept it a secret, and the *Queen's honour untouched*, they should soon have more.

The queen's honour was to be carefully guarded, because she was,

* Knight's Pictorial History.

† Sadder.

in fact, most dishonestly, and in violation of treaties of peace and amity, as they confessed, thus secretly travelling to do the Queen of Scots mischief in her realm during her absence. Knox, the reformer, was amongst the most active of them, and amongst the most clamorous for some money, and Saddler soon advised the sending of 6000*l.* or 8000*l.* more, which was done. The advocates of Elizabeth have endeavoured to excuse these acts, on the plea that Elizabeth was supporting the Protestant interests, and that there were designs on the part of the Catholics in England to join those of Scotland and France, to set up Mary and put down Elizabeth. But even had this been fully proved, the means used were of a character too base for any honourable mind. Elizabeth had far better have charged the French and Scotch governments with such designs, and declared herself in a position to defend herself. She would have roused a spirit amongst all her own Protestant subjects, which the whole world would not have dared to encounter. But Elizabeth's real design was to undermine Mary; and when she resorted not only to instigations of insurrection, but of *murder*, the object became too apparent to be mistaken. In all those dreadful transactions—the murder of Rizzio, the murder of Darnley, and other murders, the money and the instigations of Elizabeth are now brought to the daylight. We cannot wade through all the depths and windings of these black transactions; but the reader may consult the *State Papers* now published, “Knight’s Pictorial History of England,” and “Tytler’s History of Scotland,” where he will find that all the men concerned in those most shocking and diabolical acts were in the pay of Elizabeth; and when they were obliged to flee, were received and protected by her. Historians declare, that at the very end of her reign, and when Mary was in her bloody shroud, there were strong reasons to believe that the hand of Elizabeth was in that mysterious affair, the Gowrie conspiracy, and that its object was to get rid for her of Mary’s son, James.

Be that as it may, nothing is more certain, than that the character of the unfortunate Mary has been systematically blackened by the paid agents, tools, and writers of Elizabeth: and nothing is more clear than that whatever may have been the errors and frailties of Mary, she, on all occasions, demanded to be set face to face with her accusers. When the celebrated casket of letters was produced by her unnatural brother, the Earl of Murray, the base paid tool of Elizabeth, professing to be letters of Mary to Bothwell, she demanded to see them, and to be confronted with those who asserted that they were hers, declaring them vile forgeries. On all these occasions, what did Elizabeth? Exactly that which a guilty

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conscience and no other would have done ; steadily, and on every occasion, she refused the reasonable demand. On her very last trial Elizabeth refused to allow her to confront her enemies and accusers, and even to permit her to know who the latter were. There cannot be any mind so dense, or so devoid of honour, as not to see that Elizabeth's whole conduct was that of the tyrant determined to destroy, and conscious that it was by foul means.

Mary's character and conduct we do not undertake to become the advocates of ; but it is only just to her and to history to remark, that her actions and declarations were those of a woman—an open-hearted, generous, affectionate woman—with, it may well be, the failings and passions of such a woman. Elizabeth's character and conduct were those of a heartless, bloodless, and implacable tyrant. Mary never demanded more from her than to be acknowledged as her heir, which, as she perpetually asserted that she would never marry, might have been conditionally done. There is every appearance to justify the belief that, had she said to Mary, "Let us be friends ; let us unite our power to secure the peace of the whole island ;" the proposal would have found a glad response in Mary's bosom. The turbulent nobles of Scotland would have been kept in check ; Mary would have sat with honour on the throne, supported by the powerful friendship of Elizabeth ; and she, or her son, as he afterwards did, would have proudly succeeded to the sceptre of England. As it was, Elizabeth, guided probably both by the base counsels of her own heart and of her ministers, chose the disgraceful instead of the glorious course ; embittered with her hatred the life of her more generous rival ; covered herself with infamy and blood ; and terminated her days in wretchedness.

From the first to the last of this strange history, the comparison of the two queens is all in Mary's favour, and derogatory to Elizabeth. Both have weaknesses, but those of Mary are a woman's, and a loving, joyous, and generous woman's ; those of Elizabeth are the weaknesses of a tyrant,—coldness, deceit, creeping vengeance, pitiable vanity, and an envenomed hatred of everything like love and domestic enjoyment. Mary, a young widow of eighteen, returning to her native country, requested permission of Elizabeth to allow her to shorten her voyage by passing through England. Elizabeth not only refused it, but refused it with angry and gross expressions to Mary's ambassador, D'Oisel. The observations which Mary made on this ungenerous attack to Throgmorton, Elizabeth's ambassador, and preserved in the Cabala,*

* See also Hume ; Spotswood.

are such as do the highest honour to her heart and spirit, and must have overwhelmed her sordid rival with shame, if of that she had been capable. They breathe a noble sentiment. She declares that she meddles not with Elizabeth's affairs, and will not. That she has never been wanting in all friendly offices, and heartily wishes that "they were as closely allied in affection as in blood;" which she justly adds, "would be a most valuable alliance."

But what made the act of Elizabeth the more reprehensible was, that she knew that Mary, young, beautiful, and inexperienced, was going from a court and country where she had, as it were, been delicately educated, to one semi-barbarous, and whose nobles, to use the language of a native of Scotland, "were a remorseless set of men, who had rarely lived in peace even under the government of the hardiest and most skilful of their kings." Nay, who "had murdered all the kings of her most unhappy race, or sent them to the grave broken-hearted, as was the case with her own father." She knew this, and more than this, and a noble heart would have taken her young relative to her house and bosom; given her that advice and that support which she so much needed; and there is every reason to believe that she would have met with a grateful return, for Mary's heart was full of generous affection. Elizabeth would thus have won the glory of a great and magnanimous conduct. But what did she? As Mary had even hinted in her observations to Throgmorton, there was every reason to believe that Elizabeth had placed a fleet to intercept her if possible; and there is abundant evidence that she had prepared for Mary's destruction at home by her emissaries and her money; and had at this time the whole body of venal and savage nobles in her pay against her. "All this," says the historian just quoted, "was part of a system which was never interrupted by the English court till Mary was ruined and disgraced." Her practices had already broken the heart of the Queen Regent, Mary's mother. Mary's own return was worse than being thrown into a den of hungry wild beasts, for there she would have been torn to pieces at once, while, as it was, she was torn piece-meal. The nobles at that period presented the most corrupted and degraded aspect. Savage and unrefined they had always been, but now they were promoting Protestantism, not for any care they had about religion, but to seize on the estates of the church. They hallooed on the preachers as their tools, to denounce the Catholics and pull down the churches, and then bilked them of their prey, seizing it all themselves, and setting all the thunders of Knox, which had "sent tower and temple to the ground," at

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defiance. These nobles affected surprise, and expressed a sincere displeasure when the Presbyterian ministers put in their claim for a share of the monastic and the other church property; and asked them whether "the nobles of Scotland were to turn hod-bearers in the building of the kirk." Knox replied that "they might be worse employed;" but his complaints were no more regarded than the rumblings of distant thunder. Nothing could be forced again out of the iron grasp of these true aristocrats; but they allowed the clergy a miserable modicum out of the tithes which yet remained in the hands of bishops or abbots of the old church, or of lay impropiators. This, however, amounted only to four thousand pounds sterling for a thousand parishes, of which the national church consisted—about six pounds a year for each clergyman; and even this was much begrudged by the hungry nobles, who were fattening on the lands with which the piety of preceding ages had enriched the Romish church, and which those very preachers had preached away from it.

Into the midst of such a set of wolves and hyenas, whetted to still more ravenousness by the hopes of Elizabeth's traitor-gold, did the Queen of England see, with a secret certainty of her destruction, her youthful cousin pass, whom she hated alike for her beauty, and for the moral certainty that she or her descendants would possess that power which she now held, and would fain hold firm. The dreadful scenes which followed, were the natural and inevitable results of Elizabeth's preparations. How far Mary in her youth and weakness became implicated in the crimes laid to her charge, we will not pretend to say; but two things are certain, that she both denied them, and demanded, on all occasions, the fullest examination, face to face with her enemies, and that all these enemies were in the pay of Elizabeth. The murderers of Rizzio and Darnley were the paid agents of Elizabeth as those of Cardinal Beatoun, the able head of the Catholic party in Scotland, had been of her father. "The revelation of these atrocious secrets, which had been concealed for centuries amid the dust and cobwebs of the State Paper Office," says Knight's History, "is enough to make the villains turn in their graves." The direct bargaining for the murder of Cardinal Beatoun by Henry, through his agents, the Earl of Hertford, Thomas Forster, and the notorious Sir Ralph Saddler, who spent a long life in the commission of the blackest crimes, is indeed one of the most atrocious things in history.

Henry, fancying that all opposition to his schemes upon that

country would cease in Scotland if Cardinal Beaton was put out of the way, he entertained the project of assassinating the cardinal. The Earls of Angus and Casillis, with Sir George Douglas, agreed to do this murder if the king would pay for it. There was thereon much negotiating and bargaining carried on between these parties and the king, through Thomas Forster and Sir Ralph Saddler. Sir Ralph, in obedience to Henry's orders, recommended the assassination as of himself, and told them that the project had *not* been communicated to King Henry. The *noble* Scots were too cunning for that; they would have the king's commission, and security for the reward, saying, "If the king would have the cardinal dead, and would promise a good reward," it could soon be done. Henry, like his daughter afterwards, desired the deed to be done, but his *honour* to be saved, and eventually the cardinal was taken off by less scrupulous and less conspicuous assassins, Norman Leslie and his coadjutors, also Henry's pensioners, who immediately informed the king of the accomplishment of the deed, and received from him assistance and support.*

Such were the deeds and practices of Elizabeth's father, and such were her own, and carried on by the same agents. The men calling themselves noble, on both sides of the border, were never found averse to undertaking base and treacherous commissions like these. And, says a modern historian, "there is no calculating the extent of demoralisation produced by such a system as that maintained for nearly half a century by Elizabeth alone, with the Cecils, the Saddlers, the Smiths, and the rest of that tribe."†

Elizabeth succeeded. She embittered the life of Mary; she engaged a set of traitors, Mary's own subjects, to seize her husband, Darnley, his father, and herself; to deliver the two former to Elizabeth, and to imprison Mary for life. This Chalmers has shown from original documents. "There are reasons," says the writer of Knight's History, "for believing, what is positively asserted by some, that Elizabeth and Cecil were accessories in the murder of Rizzio, both before and after the fact. Nothing is more notorious than that the horrible Ruthven, and the poisoner, Morton, who if he had an enemy gave him a dinner which he never could digest, were in Elizabeth's constant pay, and often under her avowed protection, and that she refused to give them up when Mary indignantly demanded it; coolly replying that "she did not think proper to do so till Mary's anger against them

* Tytler's Hist. of Scotland.

† Knight's History of England.

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was cooled."* She at length compelled her to fly, like a bird into the mouth of the fascinator serpent, into her own kingdom, and the rest is only too well known. She disgraced the realm by a shocking breach of all hospitality, all law and right; kept her imprisoned, brought the nobles, the very nearest to her throne, and the very nearest in blood, her own brother amongst them, as calumniators against her; refused all her demands of justice and a fair examination, and eventually imbrued her hands in her blood. In the course of this tragedy, how many other victims were dragged into the vortex! The Duke of Norfolk, whose head she took off; the Earl of Northumberland, who was said to blow his own brains out in the Tower, to prevent the confiscation of his estates on his trial and attainder, but whom there is every reason to believe was murdered there;† Anthony Babington and his companions, said to be some of the finest and most promising spirits of the nation, but carried away by a desire to rescue the injured queen from her captivity; and the many minor personages who were involved like birds in her nets.

Every one knows the cold and remorseless manner in which she sacrificed any one for her own base purposes. The State Papers have now opened many a strange scene of horror, and shown that, as Burghley's son, in James the First's time, could invent the Gunpowder Plot, his father before him, with the forger Walsingham, could and did invent many a plot to bring the Catholics into odium, and thereby not only to strengthen his own party, but to make sure of the destruction of the Queen of Scots. The conduct of the English court at this time has been compared to a set of fellows who drive a dog mad and then kill him for being so. The country was kept in constant alarm from popish plots, and yet, when they were sought into, no body of influential men were ever found engaged in them. But the rack was kept actively at work by the spider, Burghley, in his secret dens; confessions, such as they wanted, were extorted from vanquished human nature, and letters and other documents were never wanting, for the forger, Walsingham, was ever ready with them; they were laid in the necessary places, and were found when necessary. The conduct of the Catholics in the threatened invasion by Spain, the most Catholic of powers, proved how

* Chalmers' Life of Queen of Scots.

† See these strange revelations in Ellis's Original Letters, first series, vol. ii.; Burghley Papers and Lansdowne MSS., quoted by Raumer.

See Howell's State Trials, and the Burghley Papers, in which a remarkable letter of Sir Walter Raleigh to Burghley, leaves very little doubt on the subject. The Catholics never credited the suicide.

falsely the Catholic population had been accused of treason against their government or country. But, in the mean time, Campion and his companions had, to use Burghley's own expression, been so "*gently racked*,"* that the whole country cried shame. Arden, a gentleman of ancient family in Warwickshire, had been made a victim to the revenge of his neighbour, Leicester, and an evidence extorted from his wife and others by torture. Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, son of the late Duke of Norfolk, and grandson of the chivalrous and gifted Earl of Surrey, had been driven by the fate of his family to embrace Catholicism, to become a moody and melancholy man, and to resolve to quit the kingdom, and retire to some country where he should be safe from questionings, and tortures, and the block, on which his father and grandfather had poured their blood, in sacrifice to the implacable Tudors. He had written an affecting letter to be delivered to the queen, on the sorrows and unmerited treatment of his family; but his own servants, who were in the pay of Burghley, had delivered him up, and he was consigned to a life-long prison. A plot had been detected, or invented by the court, in which Francis Throgmorton, a gentleman of Cheshire, after having been racked three times, at the side of the terrible machine for the fourth time, was made to criminate himself, and was consigned to the gallows and embowelling knife at Tyburn, where he protested before God that his confession was a mere fiction to escape further torture. The Lords Paget and Charles Arundel, named also in the plot, had escaped to France, declaring by proclamation that they fled because they knew that there was no protection in innocence against the murderous acts of Leicester and the forged letters of Walsingham.

But one of the most remarkable instances of the wonder-working power of rack and torture was the case of Dr. Parry, a Welshman, and member of the House of Commons. This man had, in his place in the House in 1584, denounced the penal statutes then proposed to Parliament, which were most atrocious, as full of blood, danger, and despair to English subjects, and pregnant with fines and forfeitures, which would not go to enrich the queen, but certain private individuals. It was not long before Parry was arrested on a charge of high treason, and, after six weeks spent in that pleasant place, the Tower, came out so changed a man that he was ready on his trial to say and swear anything, avowing that the Pope himself had engaged him to assassinate Elizabeth. The strangeness of the man's conduct and assertions, of which there was not a particle of other evidence,

* Somer's Tracts.

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plainly convinced people that he was worked upon to say these things, in hopes of a pardon. But he had got into the webs of the great spider, and he was not allowed to escape without blood; he had served the required purpose, and was ordered to be hanged. His astonishment was extreme, and he then as lustily cried out that he was tricked—that he was innocent as a child—that his confession was a mere invention—and he appealed to the queen, and to Burghley and Walsingham. He wrote in agony to the queen, begging her to “remember her poor Parry, chiefly overthrown by her hand.” The only answer was to hurry him to execution, and there, when he protested again his innocence, again appealed to the queen’s honour and conscience, he was as speedily as possible turned off, had one swing of the rope, was cut down and embowelled, giving a great groan. It is supposed that the secret practisings on this poor man had quite overturned his intellect.

Parry might have known pretty well what would have been his fate, by Elizabeth’s acting in a case where much higher, and to her indispensable, personages were concerned. As we have observed, she had engaged Murray, Mary’s brother, with the Earls of Argyll, Glencairn, Rothes, the Duke of Chatelherault, &c., to rise against Mary, and, if possible, seize her; but Mary defeated them, and they fled to England. Mary was loud and indignant against Elizabeth for countenancing them, and the French and Spanish ambassadors complained as loudly that she was setting a fatal example, countenancing rebellions, and betraying the cause of sovereigns in general. Elizabeth, who, while she hesitated at no act, however black, to compass her ends, was always sensitively alive to what she called “her honour,” that is, to these facts being known, was stung to the quick by these remonstrances, and calling Murray, and Hamilton, the Abbot of Kilwinning, before her, ordered them, in the presence of those ambassadors, to confess that she had in no wise incited them to the late insurrection, and that there had been no correspondence whatever between her and them. The Earl of Murray and the noble abbot saw what was expected of them, and made a most solemn declaration accordingly of Elizabeth’s perfect innocence in the affair; but were not a little astonished, almost before they had closed their mouths, to see her turn short upon them, and say sternly,—“You have now spoken the truth, for neither I nor any in my name hath instigated your revolt from your sovereign. Begone, like traitors as you are!” Unfortunately for Elizabeth’s veracity, a vast mass of contrary evidence exists in the State Paper Office; and the Scotch rebels, retiring from her court, only removed to the borders, where they could be in correspond-

ence with their fellow-traitors in Scotland, and where they were maintained by Elizabeth.

The crowning scene of Elizabeth's hypocritical and heartless conduct was, however, that by which she at last advanced to the murder of Queen Mary, and at the same time exerted all her cunning to make the odium of the deed fall upon others. The hard-hearted acts of injustice of this so-called "glorious queen" are so numerous, and make up so much the staple of her life, that it is difficult to find any of another kind. But what is more to our present purpose to observe is, that in all these dreadful violations of justice, humanity, and manhood, there was not found one so-called nobleman who dared to protest against them. Where now were your barons and your charter? where now your Runnymede, when the constitution and the people were trodden under foot? Such men as Cecil, the great spider; Walsingham, the forger and falsifier of letters; Saddington, the political pimp and negotiator of murders; and others of the same stamp; men without the smallest feeling of nobility or honour; men with keen intellects but frozen hearts; men with no single drop of warm blood in their veins; sly, treacherous, ruthless workers in darkness, had introduced a system of government more infernal than that attributed to Machiavelli; and which, had the English nation been as subservient as the aristocracy, would have sunk the realm into everlasting perdition and infamy, and made it worse than Spain with its Inquisition.

Elizabeth and those men proposed all sorts of ways to get rid of Mary quietly. Leicester, the grandson of the tax-gatherer and extortioner, Dudley, and himself—rank with the odour of secret crimes, yet still the great earl and favourite of this virgin-queen, though she had been duly informed by her own minister, Throgmorton, of his murder of his wife,—proposed to poison her. Others of these very pretty ministers as coolly proposed to shorten her days by additional rigour, though they had completely crippled her, and made her hair white as the snow of her native mountains, with seventeen years' hard imprisonment in damp and chill castles. But none of these meeting the approbation of the queen, who wanted some palpable scapegoat as a victim, she urged Walsingham and Davison, even after she had signed the death-warrant, to write a letter to Mary's keepers, Sir Amyas Paulet and Sir Drew Drury, to propose to them to assassinate their prisoner privately. She instructed them to say that "she wondered, with all their professed zeal in her service, that they had not in all this time found out some way to shorten the life of that queen."

But Elizabeth had given now too many examples of her

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treachery to find readily a person who would take on him a queen's murder, and leave himself at her mercy. It is a proud satisfaction to have to record the existence, in so bad an age, of a man who so evidently recoiled with abhorrence from an illegal murder as Amyas Paulet, though he had already allowed his name to stand in the list of the commissioners, who were actually her legal murderers. Poor old Amyas probably thought that a queen and all the great law-officers could sanction anything in a legal form, or at least that the responsibility would lie on the ministers and law lords, who should know the most and best about it, and not on him, a mere *pro forma* and inconsiderable member of the commission. At all events, he spurned like an honest man this loving solicitation of his queen to become a private executioner, though his prisoner was legally condemned. In answer to this letter, which has justly been styled "a damnable document," he, "in great grief and bitterness of mind deplored being so unhappy as to have lived to see this unhappy day, in which he was required by direction of his most gracious sovereign, to do an act which God and the laws forbade. His goods, his life were at her majesty's disposal; he was ready to lose them the next moment, if it should so please her, but God forbid that he should make so foul a shipwreck of his conscience, or leave so great a blot on his posterity, as to shed blood without law and warrant."

This would have struck home where any conscience was left; in Elizabeth it excited only rage. She called Paulet "a precise and dainty fellow," and declared to Davison, that there were those, however, who would do it for her sake, and named one Wingfield and others.* Some victim this dreadful woman must have, and it became the unfortunate Davison. No sooner had he delivered the warrant at her command to the Lord Chancellor, and it was sealed and executed, than she declared that Davison had disobeyed her strict order, which was to keep the warrant secretly in his possession; "that it was an *unhappy* accident; appealed blasphemously to the Judge of heaven and earth for her innocence; declared that she *abhorred dissimulation*; deemed nothing so worthy of a prince as a *sincere and open conduct*; and vowed that she never intended to carry the sentence into execution!" Poor Davison was at once clapped into the Tower, fined £10,000,—more than he possessed,—and sentenced to remain in prison during the Queen's pleasure. This *pleasure* continued the seventeen long years of his life. The innocent tool of this most base and unfeminine queen was

* Sir Harris Nicolas's *Life of William Davison*.

ruined for ever, and in palsy, poverty, and misery, lay in his dungeon, the unpitied victim of her hypocrisy. It would be a curious revelation could we know how often this throned tyrant and murderess, as she held dalliance with her favourites, listened to the sickening adulation of such men as Raleigh, who, with powers made for all mankind and for immortality, could heap on a most hideous hag of nearly seventy* the praises of a Venus and a Juno, to be paid in the estates of such men as Anthony Babington; how often, while she paraded at pageants and in processions, and swelled with insane vanity in Leicester's mad apotheosis at Kenilworth, while she sate at the board of luxury, or lay on her couch of down, she called up in her petrified soul a consciousness of poor Davison in his dungeon; of Hertford and his wife, Lady Catherine Grey, the sister of Lady Jane, in their dungeon; and of thousands of her other victims in their dungeons and their graves.

As a fitting accompaniment to this portion of her life, we will record the names of the titled slaves who sate in commission of trial on the unfortunate Mary, and murdered her for Elizabeth in legal fashion, refusing her demand to be heard in full parliament, refusing her all counsel and evidence, refusing even to allow her to see her accusers. There was no want of high names, or legal authorities, on this most illegal commission. There were the Chancellor Bromley, the Lord Treasurer Burleigh, the Earls of Oxford, Kent, Derby, Worcester, Rutland, Cumberland, Warwick, Pembroke, and Lincoln, the Viscount Montague, the Lords Abergavenny, Zouch, Morley, Stafford, Grey, Lumley, Stourton, Sandys, Wentworth, Mordant, St. John of Bletsoe, Compton, and Cheney; Sir James Croft, Sir Christopher Hatton, Sir Francis Walsingham, Sir Ralph Sandler, Sir Walter Mildmay, and Sir Amyas Paulet; Wray, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, Anderson, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, Manwood, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and Gawdy, one of the Chief Justices of the Common Pleas.

The most prominent event in the reign of Elizabeth was the defeat of the Spanish Armada; and this coming soon after the legal murder of Queen Mary, was made every use of to turn away the thoughts of the nation from that black deed. Here, too, all the ingenuity of the clever rogues about Elizabeth was

* In Hampton Court Palace hangs a series of portraits of Elizabeth, from her very childhood to her latest period of life. At no period, if these are to be believed—and we may suppose the court painter would do his best—had she the slightest pretensions to even prettiness. In late age she presents the most singular contrast in existence of haggishness and tawdriness.

exerted to represent her as the life and soul of the national resistance. She was a capital actress, and did not want for good prompters. She was mounted on a war-horse, had a suit of light armour clapped on her back, and a marshal's truncheon into her hand; and, in this style, made a brave, flourishing, and *ad captandum* speech to the army assembled at Tilbury Fort. In our childish days, our hearts have beaten at the description of this well-acted scene, but we have since learned too well what both Elizabeth and her prompters were, and can only smile at the farce. She kept herself safe between London and Tilbury Fort. She knew well that at the mouth of the Thames lay a gallant fleet, with the deathless commanders, Drake, Raleigh, Frobisher, Hawkins, and Howard on board, ready to drive to destruction any array of Spaniards that dared to appear. She declared in her speech that, "she herself would be their general, —the guide and rewarder of every one of their virtues in the field;" having said which, she retired comfortably to London to her dinner, and left the army to the worst and most unfitting general in the world—to Leicester!

This was a sad conclusion to so fine an harangue, for this carpet-knight, Leicester, this craven, woman-killing Leicester, had not long before proved himself in the Netherlands the most contemptible of commanders.* In fact, in all except the war-horse, the armour, and the speech, there is nothing in the management of Elizabeth and her advisers, which will bear examination. She had weakly committed the army which covered the capital, through a pitiable favouritism, to the most incompetent of commanders. The fleet, through her parsimony, and probably the official embezzlement of her courtiers, was found to be so ill provided, that during the period of action, it three several times exhausted its ammunition,† and had it not been for the spirit of the commanders and the zeal of the people on shore, Providence alone would have had the merit of dispersing this great armada. The Queen's parsimony would have produced the most serious consequences, had it not been gallantly resisted by the admiral. No sooner did there come a rumour that the Spanish fleet had suffered considerable injury at

* Elizabeth had been obliged to scold him, and the States had called him to account for his gross misconduct; on which this grandson of an executed extortioner complained to his courtiers *that one of his rank should be so questioned* by shopkeepers and artisans.

† True and exact account of the Wars in Spain; Walsingham's Letter to Burghley; Wright.

sea, than she commanded the Lord Admiral, Lord Howard of Effingham, to discharge four of his largest ships. The admiral belonged to a family which, in those times, formed a brilliant exception to the aristocratic class. It had done more, and suffered more under the Tudors by far than any other. The victor of Flodden, the brave Lord Admiral, Sir Edward Howard, who had so daringly died at the head of his fleet, in the harbour of Brest in Henry VIII.'s reign; the gallant and poetical Surrey—these had ennobled themselves by their own deeds, and their relative, Lord Howard of Effingham, now bravely dared to disobey the Queen, and refused to discharge a man.

It was, in fact, now conspicuously demonstrated, as it has been in a thousand other instances, that the English nation is built up, maintained, and defended by its own popular energy, though it has so universally suffered this glory to be taken from it, and hung exclusively on aristocratic and royal brows. Those great causes to which we have already referred, the steady industry and enterprise of the people; the discoveries of the compass, of printing, of America, and the sea way to the East Indies; the flight of the Protestant manufacturers hither, and the influence of the reformation, had raised the wealth, spirit and fortunes of the English people now to such a pitch, that they dared the whole world abroad, and began to dare the government at home. The commerce of England was grown great, and demanded a great fleet to protect it. The names of Drake, Cavendish, Hawkins, Frobisher, Raleigh, and Howard, were heard in terror, wherever the enemies of England were to be found; and they showed in their attack of the *invincible armada*, that they had seized the trident of the seas, and placed it in the victorious hands of Britannia, the Empress of the Ocean. On that element alone beat now brave hearts enow to defend their native land. But on the land itself, as in the threatened invasion of our time, there was an universal flame of patriotic enthusiasm. It was not the mere spectacle of the Queen on horseback haranguing her troops, though that was well and politically advised, but it was the soul of a great people now aroused to scorn a mercenary enemy which lived and glowed from end to end of the country. "There was not a corner of England," says the historian, "which did not ring with preparation, and muster its armed force. The maritime counties from Cornwall to Kent, and from Kent to Lincolnshire were furnished with soldiers, both of themselves and with the auxiliary militia of the neighbouring shires, so that upon any spot where a landing might be effected, within the space of eight-and-forty hours, an army of twenty thousand men could be

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assembled. The Catholics vied with the Protestants in activity, in zeal, in patriotism; and as their gentlemen of rank were generally excluded from command by the jealousies of the Protestants, although the Lord Admiral himself was a Catholic, they served in the ranks like common soldiers, or they embarked in the ships to do the work of common sailors. This grand fact ought to have proved to the Queen how unfounded had been her fears, how uselessly she had imbrued her hands in blood."*

It is now, indeed, that the eye of the patriotic reader, weary with the crimes of kings, and disgusted with the rapacity or the subserviency of aristocracy, begins to kindle at the glad spectacle of an awakening people, and his ears to catch with startled rapture words of manly freedom and independence. Elizabeth continued haughty and despotic. Spite of the generous and glorious sight manifested on the approach of the armada, of the persecuted and suspected, from the lowest to the highest, fighting by the side of their oppressors for their common country, she continued to imprison, hang, draw, and quarter those who dared to think differently to herself; and though all the nobles crouched in coward silence, the House of Commons began to assume a bold front, and the Queen and her cold-blooded Burleighs and Walsinghams trembled.

The first demonstration of that spirit which was to be the salvation of the nation, and perhaps eventually of the liberty of the whole world,—for without the bright, the everlasting, the emulation-stirring example of England, where indeed would liberty have been?—was made by Parliament in the case of Strickland, one of its members, in 1571. This Parliament was violently Anti-catholic, and in that blind zeal persecuting; but it was equally leavened with the stern, bold spirit of Puritanism, the spirit which first dared to stand upright before the faces of kings and bishops, and not only present itself as ready for death, as many Protestant reformers had done, but resolved to have its rights, as the spirit of the people. This Parliament had the hardihood to introduce no fewer than seven bills for furthering the cause of reformation, and for extirpating what it considered crying abuses. Any one may imagine the astonishment of Elizabeth, of the woman who made the whole body of nobles cringe and creep before her; who cut off their heads, or imprisoned them at will; the woman who said to bishops when they did not please her.—“I made you, and if you resist me, by God I will unfrock you:” who insulted the very primate’s wife in her husband’s presence, in her own house at Lambeth, and when

* Stow; Camden; Bentivoglio; Strype; Ellis; Southey; Knight.

hospitably entertained by her, saying, "Madam, I may not call you, and mistress I am loath to call you!" Madam being the style of a married lady, and mistress of a single one. She was furious, and ordered Strickland, the mover of the bills, to remove from the house. The house, with a new and wonderful audacity, summoned Strickland to its bar, and demanded the reason of his absence. The reason it knew perfectly, but it resolved to assert its privileges, and so, as soon as Strickland had declared the true cause, the house pronounced the privileges of Parliament to be violated in his person; declared such a measure, if submitted to, would prove a dangerous precedent; and that the Queen herself *could neither make nor break the law*.

Here was a new language indeed! This was a startling contrast to that language which Elizabeth had held to her first Parliament in 1558, in which she told them, on their requesting her to marry, that "it was great presumption in them to *require* them who may *command*;" and that "it was their duty to *obey*, and not to take upon them to bind and limit her in her proceedings, or even to press their advice upon her."* Here they told her flatly, that *it was their duty* to bind and limit her, and that it was not her prerogative to command, but to obey the laws like themselves. It was neither queen, nobles, nor commons alone which could make the laws, but the united powers of the constitution, and even the sovereign was not allowed to break them.

"This house," said they, "which has the faculty of determining the right of the crown itself, is certainly empowered to treat of religious ceremonies and church discipline." The ministers were astounded at this bold language, and after a consultation, the speaker proposed that the debate should be suspended. Enough had been done at one blow; the house adjourned, and the next morning Strickland appeared in his place, and was received with loud cheers!

This was the first of those glorious victories which have raised the principle of the sovereignty of the British Parliament, of, in fact, the British people, above all question, and established the pre-eminence of the first and most glorious nation of the universe!

One of the boldest spirits of this Parliament was Paul Wentworth, who had startled the Queen and ministers in the preceding year, and who soon became still more conspicuous. To this gentleman all posterity is much indebted for its liberties. Elizabeth dismissed the Parliament at the close of the session

* Holinshed.

through Lord Keeper Bacon, with a severe lecture on their strange, unbecoming, and undutiful conduct; declaring that "she utterly disallowed and condemned their folly in meddling with things not appertaining to them, nor within the capacity of their understandings."

The primate tried another mode to divert this new spirit from its present alarming track. He sent for Mr. Wentworth, its great and eloquent incarnation, and asked why the house had thought proper to make some omissions in the thirty-nine articles against the will of the court and prelacy? "He asked me," says Wentworth, "why we did put out of the book the articles for the homilies, consecration of bishops, and such like?" "Surely, Sir," said I, "because we were so occupied with other matters, that we had no time to examine them, how they agree with the word of God"—"What!" said he, "surely you do mistake the matter. You will refer yourselves wholly to us therein."—"No, by the faith I bear to God," said I, "we will pass nothing before we understand what it is, for that were but to make you popes. Make you popes who will," said I, "we will make you none." *

Vengeance was, of course, let loose on the sturdy Puritans—this new and ominous sect. They were chased out of their meetings; their ministers were persecuted with a dreadful spirit of atrocity, never surpassed by Rome itself, and which may be seen at length in their history. Numbers were imprisoned for life; whole families were reduced by the arbitrary queen, and her inquisition, the horrible Star Chamber; but the privilege of Parliament was saved, and the struggle which the petticoat-man, Elizabeth, and the spider Cecil now voluntarily commenced, never ceased till the Puritans had laid both mitre and crown in the dust at their feet.

In 1601, Elizabeth met her Parliament for the last time, sick and failing, but dressed more gorgeously and gaily than ever. We cannot better give this scene than literally from Knight's History. "She was in great straits for money in order to carry on the war in Ireland. The house voted her much more than ever had been voted at one time, viz., four subsidies and eight-tenths; but the Commons were as free of their complaints as they were of their money, and they called loudly and boldly for a redress of grievances. The most notorious of the abuses which disgraced the civil government of Elizabeth was an endless string of monopolies which had been for the most part bestowed by the Queen on her favourites. All kinds of wine,

* D'Ewer; Strype; History of Puritans.

oil, salt, starch, tin, steel, coals, and numerous other commodities were monopolized by men who had the exclusive right of vending them, and fixing their own prices. The complaints of the Commons were not new. They had pressed them many years before, but they had been silenced by authority, and told that no one must speak against licences and monopolies, lest the queen and council should be angry thereat. Of course, in the interval they had gone on increasing. When the list of them was read over in the house, a member asked whether bread was not among them? The house seemed amazed.* 'Nay,' said he, 'if no remedy is found for these, bread will be there before the next parliament.' The ministers and courtiers could not withstand the impetuous attacks which ensued. Raleigh, who dealt largely in tin, and had his fingers in other profitable monopolies, offered to give them all up. Cecil and Bacon talked loudly of the prerogative, and endeavoured to persuade the house that, it would be fitter to proceed by petition than by bill; but it was properly answered that nothing had been gained by petitioning in the last parliament. After a few days of such debate as the house had never heard before, Elizabeth sent down a message that she would revoke all grants which should be found injurious by fair trial of law; and Cecil seeing that the Commons were not satisfied with the ambiguous generality of this expression, gave an assurance that the existing patents should be repealed and no more be granted. The Commons hailed this victory with exceeding great joy, though, in effect, her Majesty did not revoke all the detestable monopolies. Elizabeth now employed an oblique irony at some of the movers in the debate, but the imperious tone, the harsh menacing of former years were gone; her resolute will was now struggling in vain against the infirmities of the body, and she saw that there was a growing spirit among the representatives of the people."

The end of her days, and of the dynasty of the Tudors was come; and never had a dynasty which ascended the throne with so little claim of descent, so lorded it there. Three generations before, and they were an inconsiderable family of Welshmen:

* As well it might be for the list was larger than given above. "Salt, currants, iron, powder, cards, calf-skins, felts, poledavies, (a sort of canvas) ox-shin bones, train-oil, lifts of cloth, potash, anniseeds, vinegar, sea-coal, steel, aqua-vitæ, brushes, pots, bottles, saltpetre, lead, acidensces, (books of the rudiments of Latin Grammar), oil, calamine, stone, oil of blubber, glasses, paper, starch, tin, sulphur, new drapery, dried pilchards, the exportation of iron, horn, beer and leather, the importation of Spanish wool and Irish linen."

now they had sate on the throne of England as if they had the right of a thousand years; had hanged, burnt, drawn, quartered, levelled at their feet, the proudest blood of England; addressed the proudest nobles and priests as so many dogs; used language to their parliaments that would not now be tolerated from a crowned head by a respectable sweep. They had lustily revelled in pageants and mock tourneys; pulled down the national church and spent the money on parasites and favourites; had filled the country with beggars, and here was the end. The picture of the last days of this truly termagant queen is one of the most dreary, melancholy, but most useful in history. The hard heart and the cunning head were both alike subdued by disease and terrors. She dreaded death, and with what comfort could she look on life? She, who with the whole heart of a great people with her might have pursued a high and generous career, had pursued a dark, a burrowing, and a bloody one. She who might have won the everlasting renown of a great queen, had become only a great tyrant. Never was a bitterer satire put into a person's own mouth than one of those clever rogues, her ministers, Cecil, or Walsingham, or the eloquent Raleigh, had put into her famous speech at Tilbury Fort. "Let tyrants fear! I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and goodwill of my subjects," &c.

How many thousand of misused families, and spirits of imprisoned, tortured, and disembowelled victims of her savage bigotry, both Catholic and Puritan could, before the end of her reign, have answered to that with a groan. Many, and to us at the present day, astonishing, had been her daring violations of constitutional right, of the laws of God, of man, and of humanity. She had commenced her reign by having a zealous Catholic priest, Dr. Story, kidnapped abroad, brought home, and executed as a traitor, for some ambiguous expressions, implying that she was a tyrant. She cut off the right hands of the author and publisher of a pamphlet called "The Gaping Gulph," which only showed to the English the dangers attending her then proposed marriage with the Duke of Anjou. She had hanged and embowelled alive John Felton, a gentleman of property and great accomplishment, for affixing the pope's bull of excommunication to the gates of the Bishop of London, and Felton, from the scene of his last horrors, had sent her as a token that he had no personal enmity to her, a diamond ring which he drew from his finger, worth 400*l*. Such a fact would have touched any heart but that of a tiger. She had imprisoned for life, Richard Shelley, a gentleman of Michael Grove, Sussex, for

merely presenting a petition from the Catholics against some of her arbitrary acts. Her barbarous treatment of the Puritans especially of Cartwright, and her tortures of them in her Star Chamber, would form a revolting history of themselves. These did not pass without their legitimate effect on the public mind. She had lived to feel that, but especially after her execution of the young and popular Earl of Essex, we are told that in spite of the pulpit and the press, which were then regularly paid and directed by the government, a strong current of unpopularity had set in against it. The old Queen, when she appeared abroad amongst the people, was no longer hailed by them as she had formerly been; and her ministers and counsellors were insulted and hated, yet they went on to shed more blood. Amongst the numbers of distinguished men who were executed as accomplices in Essex's mad adventure, were Sir Charles Danvers, Sir Christopher Blount, Cuffe, and Merrick, while the Earl of Southampton, the friend of Shakspeare, was imprisoned during the Queen's life, and others bought their pardons from the courtiers, and one young man was hanged for speaking against the Queen's proclamation and Essex's apprehension.*

Murders many and dark lay on her soul; but above all, that which she had so desired, so steadily for seventeen long years travailed to compass, and yet would so fain have put from her, that of her cousin, the Queen of Scots. She had torn asunder loving hearts, and had not attached one faithful one to her own. She had been most sickeningly fumed with adulation, and now knew that all, even Cecil, the son of the great Burleigh, were watching to flee away to her successor—successor! of all words the most hateful to her soul. "For the last two days," writes Beaumont, the French ambassador, "she has been sitting on cushions on the floor, neither rising nor lying down; her finger almost always in her mouth; her eyes fixed on the ground."

The great virtue of this so much lauded Queen was that of paying off her father's debts, supporting the Protestant interests on the continent, and governing economically. Besides these, which indeed are great virtues in a sovereign, and that of her masculine firmness, we really look in vain for any others. It must at the same time be remarked, that it was not so easy to

* In the State Paper office there is a curious paper of this date, entitled "Directions to the preacher." It was by those state stratagems and practices that the horrors of this reign and queen were endeavoured to be made passable to the age, and glorious to posterity; schemes which for a long time succeeded, but which must now every day give way more and more to the dreadful reality.

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extract money in her time from the Parliament; but she really does appear to have extracted all that she could without endangering the peace of the realm, and was to the last in great pecuniary difficulties from suffering herself, as well as her people, weakly to be robbed on all sides by the locusts and leeches of the court. There are also two facts which ought not to be overlooked, the moral condition of her court, and the condition of the country under her management. These are genuine and only tests of the genuine glory of a reign.

Old Harrison, a cotemporary, speaking in glowing terms of the accomplishments of the courtiers, male and female, and adding, that endeavours were not wanting to restrain vice and maintain decorum, says, "Would to God that the rest of their lives and conversations were correspondent to these gifts! for as our common courtiers, for the most part, are the best learned and endowed with excellent gifts, so are many of them the worst men, when they come abroad, that any man shall either hear or read of."* Other cotemporaries do not disguise the fact, that many of the females who formed the attendants of the virgin Queen, were as dissolute as their male associates. Warton, in his *History of English Poetry*, arrives at the same conclusion, namely, that their accomplishments appeared to have had no influence on their moral character. Roger Ascham gives a similar account. He says, indeed, "There were fair marks for youth to follow, but they were like marks out of a man's reach, too far off to shoot well at;" and private letters of the time now published, describe the court as a place "where was little godliness and exercise of religion, but where all enormities reigned in the highest degree."†

The condition of the country at large was still worse. The whole energy of the government would seem to have been employed in its intrigues in Scotland for the destruction of Mary, and in wars in Ireland and the Netherlands; in persecuting Catholics and Puritans; in dividing the fruits of monopoly amongst hungry courtiers; and in putting down, not only all free opinion, but all learning and knowledge of religion. When the schools were closed, because, as Elizabeth declared, when the people got schooling they grew very stubborn, the funds engrossed by the courtiers, and one or two preachers were thought enough for a county, what was to be expected, but what actually took place. The whole land was covered by pauperism and beggary. From the moment that Henry VIII. had taken the property of the monasteries, the great stay and resource of the

* Description of England.

† Ellis's Original Letters.

poor, all that swarm of paupers, which the system of easy relief fostered by the Catholic church had raised, fell like hungry locusts on the country. There arose a struggle, which became perpetual through the whole dynasty of the Tudors, between the government and mendicity. The statute-book abounds with the most extraordinary accounts of the legions of idle and desperate people with which the land was covered, without any resource but beggary, or robbery, and with enactments for their suppression, ending in that famous one of 45th Elizabeth, which became the established poor-law of the kingdom; giving the poor, in fact, a legal claim for support on the country at large, in lieu of that third of the church property which had belonged to them, and out of which they had been ousted by Henry VIII. and the nobles. But previous to this last of the various bills passed, they were to be seized and set to work by any one who pleased. If they ran away, they might be seized again, and branded with the letter V on the breast, and adjudged as slaves for two years. If they ran away again, they should be chained, beaten, branded with S on the cheek, and made slaves for ever. All beggars' children might be seized and put apprentice without the consent of their parents. If they ran away, they should be likewise beaten, chained, &c., and made slaves till they were four and twenty years old. The enactment of 1547 ordered that, for once running away, they should be burned through the ear with a hole an inch wide; for the second offence, be adjudged felons; for the third, put to death. All these atrocities, however, did not succeed; paupers, beggars, and thieves grew and triumphed. Every part of the country was infested with strolling players, professors of phisiognomy, palmistry, &c.; jugglers, fortune-tellers, bearwards, fencers, mountebanks, minstrels, pedlars, linkers, and *scholars of Oxford and Cambridge*, as sturdy and importunate as any of them. The overwhelming extent of this torrent of disorder and crime, during the dynasty of the Tudors, may be learned from old Harrison. He tells us that Henry VIII. in the course of his reign hanged of robbers, thieves, and vagabonds, no fewer than *seventy-two thousand*; and that in the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth, a year seldom passed in which three or four hundred criminals were not sent to the gallows; and that this was a small part of the work of the law. Strype gives the statement of a justice of peace in Somersetshire that, in 1596, ninety persons were executed in that county alone; thirty-five burnt in the hand; thirty-seven whipped; one hundred and eighty-three others apprehended for robbery, theft, and other felonies; yet after all, the number of felonies committed in the county had been five times

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the number of the persons brought to trial for them. This, by other statements, appears to have been the average condition of things. The magistrates, says the historian, were in fact overawed by the threats and confederate strength of these ruffians, and were deterred from putting the laws in force against them. Add to this, the legal murders, the persecutions, hangings, and fines for religion, and who will wish to have lived in the so much vaunted Elizabethan era? "Merry England," says Knight, in concluding the history of this reign, "was then rather a terrible country to live in." The courtly and literary splendour which makes the merry pageant of the picture which it has spread before the imagination of us all, is set off, when the whole is uncovered, by no small force of contrast in the black barbaric gloom of the other parts.

CHAPTER XI.

WITH the reign of Elizabeth ends the first phasis of the second great era of the aristocracy of England. The nobles humbled on the one hand by the crown, but on the other not less than the crown itself, startled by the growing power of parliament and the middle classes, we shall now see creeping to the side of royalty against the people, and falling with it in the strife.

The change of dynasty which now took place, had the most auspicious effect on the progress of national liberty; not because the prince was more liberal, or the aristocracy more patriotic, but precisely because the family of the Stuarts had all the arbitrary disposition of the Tudors, without either their tact or their talent. The Tudors had been a bloody and iron-handed race; their dynasty had commenced in usurpation, and with the first of their line being, as he has been justly designated by a modern historian, "a mean-souled Welshman." But with all their despotism and their crimes they had aimed at popularity. They were shrewd enough to know that the real sovereignty lay with the people, if they chose to exert it, and therefore, however much they sought to annihilate this sovereignty on certain and essential occasions, they paid a feigned homage to it. Lord Thomas Howard, in a letter to Sir John Harrington, soon after James came to the English throne, said, "Your Queen Elizabeth, did *talk of her subjects' love and affection*, and in truth she aimed

well; our king talketh of his subjects' *fear and subjection*, and herein I think he doth well too, *so long as it holdeth good.*"*

Elizabeth had always men of the highest abilities about her, however cold-blooded and unprincipled as ministers, and a glory was cast over her court and reign, spite of many horrible practices and transactions, by the names and presence of some of the most illustrious personages of our history, as Shakspeare, Sir Philip Sidney, Raleigh, Spenser, &c. But James, the first Stuart, was a ridiculous pedant, and a royal ass. He came into the kingdom such an object as had not for ages sate on our throne, and followed by a troop of hungry Scots, ready to tear him and the kingdom to pieces for wealth and honours. With the most inflated pretensions to absolutism and the divine right and supernatural glory of kings; he was in his own person as ludicrous and disgusting an object as his mother had been beautiful. He is described in no very attractive fashion by his countryman, Sir Walter Scott, in "The Fortunes of Nigel;" but his contemporaries represent themselves as overwhelmed with astonishment and disgust when they first saw him; "at the very unroyal person and behaviour of the new sovereign, whose legs were too weak to carry his body; whose tongue was too large for his mouth; whose eyes were goggle, rolling, and yet vacant; whose apparel was neglected and dirty; whose whole appearance and bearing was slovenly and ungainly, while his unmanly fears were betrayed by his wearing a thick wadded doublet, and by many other ridiculous precautions."

It was soon seen that he was at once a tyrant in principle, but luckily a coward in nature; a boaster and a sensualist, as poor as a rat, and without the slightest grace or tact to gild, as Elizabeth had done, arbitrary deeds with a sort of royal varnish of courtesy and good acting. He squandered money himself as fast as he got it; his favourites and followers seized on and squandered much more; he was a mighty hunter that hated the proper business of his government. He made the most reckless declarations of his unlimited power, in which he was encouraged and confirmed by base bishops and crown lawyers; and the Commons, who had now awoke, found him a famous subject to deal with. They stood and boldly bearded him to his face, while the aristocracy shrunk back in mean and slavish sequacity, and his reign became one of the most instructive periods to which we can revert in all our very instructive history, and prepared the way for the grand drama of the next reign. The profligacy of the king and the aristocracy stood up in impressive contrast with the

* *Nugæ Antiquæ.*

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dignity and patriotism of the people. Every step of the royal career was one of crime and shame; every attitude of the Commons assumed more and more the character of a grand consciousness of the national strength and right.

We will review the most prominent features of this reign separately; and first, for a slight glance at the style and language with which James entered England, and the courtly sycophancy with which he was received.

Cecil, son of the spider Burleigh, a son worthy of the father, who is said never to have loved or hated any one but with a selfish view, who spared no man in his malice if he could safely get him out of his way, and no meanness of adulation which could serve his purpose, had, aye before Elizabeth was dead, privately negotiated with James for his ascent to the throne; and all the other courtiers are described as looking solely to their own aggrandisement. These selfish ministers, therefore, sent off for James, and awaited his coming without taking or asking from him the slightest pledge for the liberties of the people, the privileges of Parliament, or for the many necessary reforms of abuses. James, on his part, could not move from Holyrood till they sent him money to put himself and family into decent clothes, and to pay the expenses of his journey. On his journey he advanced hunting and committing the strangest breaches of the constitution; amongst which, he hanged up without ceremony or trial, a cutpurse who was taken in the crowd at Newark assembled to see his entrance. When it was remarked to him that such acts were contrary to the laws, he exclaimed to the lords of his council—"Do I make the judges? Do I make the bishops? Then by God's wounds! I make what likes me, law and gospel!"

As he drew near London, the herds of greedy aspirants to his favour hurried out to meet him. One is nearly ready to weep tears of blood to see amongst the lowest stooping and grovelling of these grovellers, some of the finest intellects of the age and nation,—the gallant and accomplished Raleigh, and that great philosopher, but equally great and unprincipled time-server, Sir Francis Bacon. Raleigh, who had pretended to sigh under the dazzling glory of the charms of Elizabeth when she was a very hag of nearly seventy, now talked of her as "*a lady whom time had surprised*," and made way for an able king.

James, on his part, went along showering titles on all that came near him, as if he had been fully sensible of the worthless things they were. Knighthood was a very weed which he plucked up from the way-sides and flung on almost every man's head that came to meet him on his journey. Before starting

from Edinburgh he knighted the son of the lieutenant of the Tower of London. At Berwick he knighted two more Englishmen; at Widdrington, eleven; at York, thirty-one; at Work-sop in Nottinghamshire, eighteen; at Newark, eight; *on the road* between Newark and Belvoir Castle, four; at Belvoir Castle, forty-five; at Theobalds, the seat of Cecil, twenty-eight. On arriving at London he made other knights at the Charter House; thence he removed to the Tower, where he made more; and thence to Greenwich, where he made still more. By the time he entered Whitehall, he had knighted two hundred individuals of various kinds; and before he had been in England three months, he had lavished that honour on some *seven hundred*.

This was pretty well; but these are but a modicum of the host of mushroom knights and nobles that he made during his reign, and we may as well take a hasty glance at these at once. He very soon created no less than sixty-two new peers; amongst them his "little beagle" Cecil, as he was wont to call him, because he was his hound to hunt out and hunt down all those that he took a spite or a fright against. Not the least offensive to the nation was his raising to seats in the House of Lords his Scottish followers, while many of his English creations often occasioned the utmost surprise and ridicule.* But he did not stop here, for he actually created a new order of knights, called baronets. It does not reflect singular lustre on this particular branch of the aristocracy, that they owe their existence as a titled class, to this disgusting old fool, nor that their very creation by him was in the pursuance of his unconstitutional attempts to rule without a Parliament, and to levy taxes without one. He had in vain endeavoured to extort a fixed annual income from his Parliament, which had as firmly resolved not to grant any such thing till he had renounced his assumed right of giving to his own proclamations the force of laws; had instituted the High Court of Commission; the abominable and oppressive monopolies, wardships, the old grievance of purveyance, knight-service, and other things by which he contrived to fleece and irritate his subjects. In 1611 he had dissolved his sturdy Parliament, and endeavoured to raise loans by writs under the great seal amongst the merchants. But they knew too well that without authority of Parliament his writs were no security, and refused his demands. Then he opened a market *for the sale of honours*; sold peerages for large sums, and hit on this happy invention of baronets. The origin of this title ought to be held in perpetual remembrance.

* Watson; Lodge; Coke.

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It was to be hereditary, and its price 1000*l*. "Some of these new *honorable* men, whose wives' pride and their own prodigalities had pumped up to it, were so drained that they had not moisture to retain the *radical humour*, but withered to nothing. This money thus raised, is pretended for planting the north of Ireland, but it found many other channels before it came to the sea. And though at our king's first access to the crown there was a glut of *knights* made, yet at the same time he held his hand, lest the kingdom should be cloyed with them, and the world thrived so well with some that the price was afterwards brought up to 300*l*. a-piece. But now again the poor courtiers are so indigent that 60*l*. would purchase a *knighthood*, the king wanting other *means* of gratifying his servants.*

These servants were his worthless followers and favourites, on whom he lavished money and honours with the same recklessness that he extorted the cash from his subjects. Peculation and bribery went on gloriously. All government employments were set to sale, and were obtained from his minions, Somerset and the Howards, by the highest bidders. Thus Sir Folke Greville purchased the Chancellorship of the Exchequer for 4000*l*., which he paid to Lady Suffolk, the favourite's mother-in-law.

But this purchase and manufacture of titles was nothing to what it grew to afterwards in the days of the subsequent favourite, Buckingham, but four years later. The Lord High Chancellor, Bacon, and all the other great officers, were become the tools and veriest slaves of this domineering favourite; and his mother, the Countess of Buckingham, became the great market-woman of all vendable offices and honours in the kingdom. She had called together, or they had come of themselves—for such vermin are very keen of nose and nimble of foot where prey is to be had—all her country kindred. These she taught to carry themselves in courtly fashion, and matched them to the children of the chief and wealthiest nobility. Weldon says, that Buckingham's "very female kindred were numerous enough to have peopled any plantation, and little children did run up and down the king's lodgings like little rabbits started from their burrows. Here was a strange change! Formerly the king could not endure his queen and children in his lodgings; now you would have judged that none but women frequented them. Nay, this was not all, but the kindred had the houses about Whitehall, as if bulwarks and flankers to that citadel."

But Buckingham's mother, one of the most beautiful women of her time, and infamous as beautiful, not only thus stocked

* Arthur Wilson's *Life of James*.



almost all the aristocracy with those of her blood, but sold peerages, honours, and promotions, in all the departments of the army, courts of law, and the church. Purchasers were in abundance, who, so that they could obtain titles, were little concerned in how dirty a mode they got them. Some even against their will, because they were rich, and *ought* to be noble, were compelled to take titles, and pay smartly for them too, as one Richard Robarts, a merchant of Truro, who had his blood compulsively purified, and was turned into Baron Robarts at the cost of 10,000*l*. "All the titles of that date," observes Lord Dover, in his remarks on the honours and families of the British peerage, "borne by the Spencers, the Fanes, the Petres, the Arundels, the Sackvilles, the Cavendishes, the Montagues, &c. were purchased *à poids d'or*, except those that were granted to the vilest favouritism. This practice continued through the reign of Charles I. and was even more publicly acted upon as the necessities of the king and his courtiers rendered the sum of money so obtained more necessary to them. Amongst the noble families who appear to owe their honours to these causes may be mentioned, the Stanhopes, the Tuftons, and many others."

At no period, however, did the scandalous work of favouritism more disgrace the British court and nation than at this. One of Buckingham's brothers was made Viscount Purbeck, another Earl of Anglesey. Fielding, who married his sister, was made Earl of Denbigh; and Fielding's brother, Earl of Desmond in Ireland. Cranfield married a relation, and became Earl of Middlesex.

In the church the same brokerage and favoritism went on as bravely. Williams, "the secret friend" of the Countess Dowager of Buckingham, and whom at one time it was expected he would marry, had piled upon him the deanery of Westminster, the rectories of Dinam, Waldgrave, Grafton, and Peterborough, and was also chanter and residentiary of Lincoln, prebendary of Argarbie, and of Nonnington. He was then made bishop of Lincoln, still holding all these preferments, so that Heylin says of him, that "he was a perfect diocese within himself, at one and the same time, bishop, dean, prebendary, residentiary, and parson." Others less in favour, were made to pay for these holy preferments, as their lay-fellows did for their worldly ones. Martin Fotherby, of Salisbury, paid 3,500*l*. for his bishopric, and that vile practice of simony, since carried to such an extent, was begun in daring earnest. They who could not pay down hard cash at once, contracted to pay by instalments out of the revenues of their sees and livings when they got them. "There were," says Weldon, "books of rates in all offices, bishoprics, and

deaneries in England, that could tell you what fines, what pensions were to pay."

Such are the vile origin and manufacture of those titles, and of that high blood which the interested would have us to worship as something social and peculiar. But we must take a closer and somewhat more personal view of the favouritism of our modern Solomon.

The favouritism of Elizabeth, as that of a woman evinced towards handsome men, surprised nobody: but in this waddling and uncouth biped, his fondness for his successive minions had something excessively shocking and revolting. "The king had a loathsome way," says Rushworth, "of lolling his arms about his favourites' necks; and in this posture Coke's messenger found the king with Somerset, saying—'When shall I see thee again? When shall I see thee again?'" This hugging and beslobbering he could practise at the very moment that he was intending to sacrifice them, as in this instance; for he was as heartless as he was destitute of dignity and decorum. He had now given orders for the arrest of this Carr, whom he had made Earl of Somerset; and yet when the very messenger of justice arrived, he could hang round the minion's neck, and exclaim—"When shall I see thee again? When shall I see thee again?" The scene is too rich to be omitted.

When Somerset got the warrant in the royal presence, he exclaimed, that never had such an affront been put upon a peer of England. "Nay man," said the king, wheedling, "if Coke sends for me, I must go." And as soon as Somerset was gone, he added, "Now the devil go with thee, for I will never see thy face more!" He complained to the chief-justice Coke, that Somerset and his wife had made him a go-between in their adultery and murder, and added, "God's curse be on you and yours, Coke, if you spare either of them."

The first favourite of James was Sir James Ramsay, who had stabbed the Earl of Gowrie at the time of the alleged conspiracy, for which he had been created Viscount Haddington. As soon as they were settled in England, the rich land of promise, James paid off his debts to the amount of 10,000*l.*, married him to the daughter of the great Earl of Sussex, and afterwards made him Earl of Holderness. The next was Sir James Hay, successively created Lord Hay, Viscount Doncaster, and Earl of Carlisle. Then came an English one, Sir Philip Herbert, who was speedily made Earl of Montgomery. But Herbert was soon supplanted by the great favourite, whose history, next to that of Buckingham, makes the greatest figure in this disgusting reign. He was a Scotch border lad, one of the Kers, or Carrs, of Ferneyhurst, who

had been regularly got up to catch James's eye. He was a lad poor beyond even the bounds of Scottish poverty, but as Osborn describes him, "straight-limbed, well-formed, strong-shouldered, and smooth-faced, with some sort of cunning and show of modesty." He had been sent to France to acquire court graces, and being placed on his return in James's eye, at once captivated him. The history of the adultery of this minion with the Countess of Essex, of the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, his tool, and all the black crime and horror of that strange story, stand broadly written on the pages of James's reign. For this vile scoundrel, the estate and castle of Sir Walter Raleigh at Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, were rent from his wife and children, while he himself was close prisoner in the Tower; and when Sir Walter's wife threw herself on her knees before James, to implore him not thus to deprive her children of the last remnant of their fortune, all the answer she got was—"I maun ha' the land—I maun ha' it for Carr."

When this wretched favourite must give way to another, and his crimes had made it necessary that he should undergo a public trial, James, knowing that he was in possession of secrets personally of the most disgraceful nature to himself, was in an agony of anxiety, and presented the most pitiable spectacle of fear and contemptible meanness that depraved human nature can exhibit. The favourite dared him to bring him to public trial; and the hints he threw out made More, the lieutenant of the Tower, quiver and quake. He hurried to the king at Greenwich, where he found him in bed; and when he heard what More said, he fell into a passion of tears, and said—"On my soul, More, I wot not what to do! Thou art a wise man: help me in this great strait, and thou shalt find thou dost it for a thankful master!" The difficulty was only got through by promising Carr his life for his silence, yet James remained in a fever of trepidation during the whole trial; sending to every boat he saw landing, and cursing all that came without tidings.*

The history of Buckingham, James's last and greatest favourite, is one of the most remarkable and universally known in the annals of modern times. He was at once one of the emptiest, haughtiest, and most profligate of men. His presumption did not stop short at less than making love to the Queen of France. He ruled all places, actions, and persons in England. He made the immortal Bacon, when Lord High Chancellor, cringe at his feet like a dog, and compelled this wonderful man, who has been happily styled "the greatest wit, scholar, and scoundrel of his

* Weldon.

age," to sit for hours with his seals of office in his hand, amongst his scullions and trencher-scrapers, waiting for admittance to his presence. To the companionship of this base upstart did James commit his son and heir, Charles, and by the united treachery and example of Buckingham and himself, prepared him to act and suffer as he afterwards did; Buckingham, moreover, ending his worthless days by the hand of an assassin.

Such is the history of royalty and the manufacture of nobility in this reign. The plots and crimes and imbecilities of this era, as the king's treatment of his daughter, the Queen of Bohemia, his dastardly and cruel treatment of the unfortunate Arabella Stuart, and his grand discovery of that state hocus-pocns, the Gunpowder Plot, his burnings and persecutions of Papists and Puritans, belong to the general history. Our business at this point of time is to observe the grand and significant strife of king and parliament.

As we have remarked, James entered England with the most absurd vauntings of royal vanity. He told parliament that they must not begin talking about taxation and grievances, but vote him money for his immediate necessities; and when they appeared in no hurry to do this, he called both houses together, and made his famous speech to them on the god-like attributes of kings. "Kings," said he, "are *justly called gods*; for they exercise a manner or resemblance of divine power upon earth. For if you will consider the attributes of God, you shall see how they agree in the person of a king. God hath power to create or destroy; to make or unmake at his pleasure; to give life or send death; to judge all, and to be judged unaccountable to none; to raise low things, and to make high things low at his pleasure; and to God both body and soul are due. And the like power have kings. They make and unmake their subjects; they have power of raising and casting down; of life and of death; judges over all their subjects, and in all causes, and yet accountable to none but God only. They have power to exalt low things, and abase high things, and make of their subjects, like men of chess,—a pawn to take a bishop, or a knight; and to cry up or down any of their subjects, as they do their money," &c. &c.

This is the most precious definition of royal power which ever was delivered to the world by kingly lips. It is what many a tyrant has thought in his heart, but which few have dared to give utterance to, and none with so much simplicity of a silly man's faith as this second Solomon. Well might the learned Buchanan, who had educated him, when he was upbraided with turning him out such an ass, reply, "If you had but seen what a fool he was, you would only wonder that I made of him anything at all."

He had, long before he came into England, written in the same strain in his discourse "On the True Law of Free Monarchies, or the Reciproque and Mutual Duty between a King and his Natural Subjects." In this he showed that monarchies were free, and not nations; they were, as he expressed it in his title, "Free kings and their natural subjects;" or in other words, natural property,—in short, that parliaments are but machines to vote kings money, and might be used or disused as these gods pleased. He claimed full right to deal with all men's goods, and to regulate all men's consciences; and this he set about particularly to exemplify, by declaring that he would suffer no toleration of religion, by seizing money by proclamation, and by persecuting men for their creeds, just as he pleased. Most fatal doctrines were these; most fatal notions to occupy a monarch's brain, and a dreadful penance did his son do for this political philosophy in which he was educated.

But James found the House of Commons at once standing in steady resistance to his ideas of godship. Lords, bishops, judges, and lawyers, all flattered for base ends his notions of absolutism. Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, declared, when James uttered the most absurd maxims of despotic dogmatism, "that his majesty spoke by the inspiration of God." Bacon, in the council, held the like language:—"The king was the voice of God in man, the good Spirit of God in the mouth of men;" but the Commons, though they had been packed by all the corrupt and arbitrary schemes possible, stood firm, and refused to say a word about grants of money till the popular grievances, monopolies, proclamations instead of law, &c., were removed; and the astonished "god on earth" prorogued them. This continued pretty much the case for ten years. James found them still standing steadily for redress of grievances, and acknowledgment of constitutional principles. In 1610 they imprisoned one Dr. Cowell, for promulgating in his "Law Dictionary" the doctrine of royal absolutism. That the king was quite at liberty to break his coronation oath at pleasure. That he was above all parliaments and law; and that it was "incontrollable that the king of England is an absolute king." Such impression did this proceeding of parliament make on James, that he suppressed the book by proclamation.

In 1614, Bacon, that great philosopher but most pitiable time-server and traitor to liberty, submitted to James a plan for *managing* parliaments. It was to be effected by public pretences of concession without making any real ones, and by winning over the lawyers by promises of preferment, and the country gentlemen by private means, and temptations equally applicable

to them. Lord Bacon has been greatly lauded for his reforming the practice of philosophy ; but for the invention of this science of managing parliaments, which of late years has grown to such a pitch of perfection, he has had less public praise. From his phrase of *undertaking* to manage the House of Commons, the persons employed by government for these purposes, acquired the name of *undertakers* ; a class of men which ever since has been growing more numerous, active, and destructive to the constitution. But here, at the first trial of the system, it failed. Those who had been corrupted by the *undertakers* made an attempt to procure a liberal vote of money as the parliament's first act, but the general voice of the house burst forth with a resounding demand for redress of grievances, which made the court quake and the corrupt shrink back. It was evident that the spirit of the nation was up, and it rose every session higher and higher. This parliament, which was to have been *managed*, proved itself utterly unmanageable. It demanded the rule of law instead of prerogative, and as in its former session it had punished a doctor for patting absolutism on the back, it now brought Neyle, the Bishop of Lincoln, on his knees for daring to say that the Commons were striking at the root of prerogative, and making undutiful and seditious speeches, unfit for the ears even of the Lords. The Addle Parliament, as it was called, because it would pass no bill, was one of the most pregnant in our history. James had got a fright which lasted him seven years ; but when in that time he was compelled again to call a parliament, the Commons at once signalized themselves by a new and bold exercise of their power. They stood no longer demanding the abolition of monopolies, but stretched out their hands and seized the monopolists. There was a running and a quaking amongst high delinquents. Sir Francis Mitchell fled out of the kingdom ; Sir Giles Mompesson was clapped into the Tower, and afterwards banished ; Sir John Bennet, judge of the Prerogative Court, was impeached for corruption in his office ; Dr. Field, Bishop of Llandaff, was impeached for bribery in the Court of Chancery ; Sir Henry Yelverton, the Attorney-General, was condemned for illegal practices to two heavy fines and imprisonment for life ; and last, and greatest of all, the Lord Chancellor Bacon was impeached and dismissed, declared incapable of again holding office, or of sitting in parliament, and banished beyond the verge of the court ; that is, to twelve miles' distance. Here was a glorious triumph of the people, before which the king trembled, and the Lords stood like a band of terrified school-boys, begging to know all the pleasure of the Commons, and they would do it !

Tame as the Lords, however, were, James, with that mad folly, that blind spirit of despotism, which distinguished him and

all his family, only flew into a maniac rage, and during the recess arrested and imprisoned some of the most free-spoken members of parliament, and other patriots,—amongst them Selden and Sir Edward Sandys; and when the Commons, immediately on re-assembling, began to take the proper notice of this infringement of their privileges, James addressed to them an insolent letter, telling them that “they were meddling with matters far above their reach and capacity.” This had been favourite language for several reigns from the Crown to the Commons. But James told them also plainly that their privileges were hut derived from the grace and favour of him and his ancestors, and that he let them know that he both could and would punish any of them during the sitting of parliament, or after if he pleased. This was putting the match to the powder. The Commons entered a fiery protest against such royal language, and declared “the liberties, franchises, privileges, and jurisdictions of parliament, as the ancient and undoubted birth-right and inheritance of Englishmen.” The besotted monarch became a fury. Foaming and slaving at the mouth, he hastened to the House of Commons, called for the journals, erased the famous protest with his own hand, prorogued the parliament, and imprisoned Coke, Sir Robert Phillips, Selden, Pym and Mallory.

When James was compelled by his necessities to call parliament together again, neither he nor they forgot the manner and cause of their unceremonious dismissal; but although he wanted money, and was very submissive and humble, and they were in high spirits at the breaking off the Spanish match for Charles, yet they did not forget to tell him of his invasion of their privileges; and when he recriminated by allusions to the attack on his prerogative, they replied by impeaching the Lord Treasurer Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, and Master of the Court of Wards, for deficiency, bribery, and oppression, but, perhaps, more especially for advising their hasty dismissal; and, spite of James’s apologies and entreaties for him, the obsequious peers condemned him to a fine of 5000*l.*, to be imprisoned during pleasure, and to perpetual exclusion from parliament, and from the verge of the court.

Such were the popular triumphs and the progress of liberty in this reign. Through all this how carried themselves the Peers? Where were the barons of Runnymede, and the hereditary bulwarks of the constitution? Their conduct was mean and contemptible. They would originate, they would unite in nothing to check the royal exercise of lawless prerogative. They hung secretly hut timidly by the throne; but when the House of Commons rose in its lion-like majesty, at its awful roar they trembled like their pedantic prince himself, and hastened to do its will.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE decisive hour was now come! The grand hour of the teaching and the liberation of nations was come! The great drama of King and People was already composed; its characters were already in existence; the stage and the machinery were prepared. Kings had for ages proclaimed their divine commission and appointment to rule and trample down nations and laws at their pleasure; priests and nobles had echoed and applauded those vaunts, and they who had dared to deny them had fallen in their blood. Tyranny, with its self-seeking favourites and its armed myrmidons, had ridden royally over human right, with huzzas from the silken minions behind its chariot, and groans of crushed hearts beneath its wheels. Patriots had risen, had dared, perished, and left behind adored but ineffectual names. Bloody blocks, prisons with their freezing dungeons, their racks and secret horrors, had done their work on the noblest of God's creation; thrones and crowns and coronets glittered gaily where the brave had fallen, and the righteous had been condemned,—but the hour of glory and of retribution was now come! The grandest spectacle in the history of man had now to be exhibited. The tears and prayers and blood of the saints of liberty should be proved not to have been spent in vain. It should be given to England, our own beautiful land, as the portion of its eternal fame, to avenge the scorns and sufferings of the fallen hosts of patriots; to assert the rights not of cities but of nations—not of nations but of mankind. Royalty had long enough lorded it over patriotism—patriotism should now rule, arraign, and condemn royalty. The people of England should erect its tribunal in the face of heaven and of all nations; formally impeach, try, condemn, and punish absolutism in the person of one of its most earnest and most determined champions. The scene should hold in statue-like stillness the eyes of angels and of men; the lesson should strike terror through the hearts of all monarchs, and go forth as the charter of liberty to the ends of the earth and of all time.

Both parties were obviously prepared for this great transaction, as by the hand of Providence. The people had become alive to their rights, and strong enough to assert them. They had tried the moral power of freedom, and found it ripe for victory. The king, on the other hand, was not, as a man, venal and despicable. It should not be said that he fell through his worthlessness or personal crimes. It should be for his political offences that he was

nationally adjudged. And never was there prince in whom the ancient assertion, "He whom God means to destroy, he first drives mad," seemed more fully realised. Amiable and religious in his natural disposition, he had been educated in such principles of duplicity, and such ideas of kingly prerogative, that he exhibited the strangest mixture of directness of purpose and disregard of all truth that ever met in the same human being. He was truly the martyr of royalty; God seemed to have blinded his eyes, and to have hardened his heart, like that of Pharaoh, to deliver him up as the great victim of arbitrary principles. He had the air of a sacrifice from his youth; and when Vandyke painted his portrait to send to Bernini in Rome for the execution of his bust, that artist started at the view of it, and declared the possessor of that face born to destruction. In Vandyke's four celebrated paintings of him, we see him riding, as it were, on the path of his gloomy destiny. A melancholy, deep and fixed as death, reigns in his whole form and in every feature; and on that path he went, not with a wild impetuosity, but with a solemn, desperate, and downcast hardihood, blind to all the signs in heaven and on earth, the most wretched and incorrigible of men.

His silly old father, James, moulded him to the work of his own ruin. James was as cowardly as despotic, and only swaggered and then shrunk from the storm he raised. He boasted of a science of his own, which he called Kingcraft; that is, the employment of any means for the purpose of obtaining his selfish ends. Charles seems naturally to have possessed a heart capable, in its firmness and its seriousness, of great worth and accomplishment of good. But this heart was corrupted from the cradle by the paternal maxims and example. The worst ideas of the divinity of a king were infused into it, and the strong will of the boy made this inculcation irradicable as his heart's own fibres. The most pernicious principles of this kingcraft were daily infused, till there can be no doubt that the distinction between truth and falsehood became lost, and the youth had only to conceive a desire, and his warped intellect furnished him with pleas for its indulgence, of the baseness of which he was not and could not be made sensible. To complete this education, was given to him as a daily companion the most vicious, worthless, and unprincipled man of his age—Buckingham; and by the time that he arrived at manhood, we behold him fully accomplished in the dreadful school of political expedience.

In the whole affair of what is usually called Charles's romantic love-journey to Spain, this became woefully conspicuous. Both father and son pursued a course of the most shocking duplicity,

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lying, and evasion. The father gave Charles a private note to the king of Spain, saying, "We do hereby promise that whatever our son shall promise you in our name we shall punctually perform;" and the son was ready to promise to turn Catholic. Both father and son wrote humble letters to the Pope, Charles calling him Most Holy Father, and assuring him how much he longed to restore union to the church. James sent two Protestant chaplains after Charles, to prevent the outcries of the Puritans, but gave them secret orders to accommodate themselves as much as possible to Popery, saying, "For it ever has been my way to go with the Church of Rome usque ad aras;"* and Charles wrote to his father this question:—"How far may we engage you in the acknowledgment of the Pope's special power? For we almost find that, if you will be contented to acknowledge the Pope chief head under Christ, that the match will be made without him," i. e., without waiting for his dispensation. And, in fact, both father and son would have acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope to have gained their purpose, at the very time that James protested before Parliament that he would not consent to the slightest concession of Protestantism, which Charles afterwards reiterated for himself! But Charles was as fickle to the Infanta as to the church. He stole away under lying pretences, and jilted her for the princess of France; the English lost all faith in his word, and the Infanta lived, as the beloved and admired empress of Germany, to hear of his troubles and defeats from his subjects, but not of his ultimate execution. James's kingcraft was not merely the destruction of his son, Charles, but of his whole race and line.

Here then stood king and people ready for the most momentous and influential contest in the history of the world. As every step of James's reign had been a crime, or a folly, every step of Charles's, from the moment that he mounted the throne to that at which he stood prisoner at the bar of his people, was a fatality. Nature herself seemed to prognosticate his miserable career; for he was proclaimed king amid drenching rains; and as the plague broke out in London again, with unusual violence, on his marriage, he conducted his wife into his capital amid the renewed fall of rains and the ravages of this pestilence. He had contrived by this marriage to involve himself in the most fatal difficulties; for the people, who had recently escaped from the dreadful reign of Popery, and were in alarm at the active schemes of its adherents for its restoration, saw in his wife a Catholic, and in her train of twenty-nine priests, fifteen seculars, and a young bishop, so many emissaries of the dreaded and abhorred superstition.

* Hardwick and Clarendon State Papers.

The whole of his public life, from its first act to the last, was, like that of his father, a determined attempt to defy the constitution, to rule without parliaments, and to make his own will the sole law; but this he did with a far more daring heart and tone than his father. This he exhibited at once. He issued warrants to raise troops, and to extort money from the people for their maintenance, without waiting for a parliament, and sent out a fleet and army to assist the French king against the French Protestants, a service in which the soldiers and sailors, with true British hearts, refused to fight. He met his first parliament with a demand for vast supplies, and they met those with their constant demands for redress of grievances. They granted him tonnage and poundage, *not for life*, as had been the practice for two centuries; and his obsequious House of Peers threw out this bill to please him, *because* it was not for life. He adjourned parliament to Oxford, but there he found them still bold in their demands. The sale of public offices, the prodigality of his household, the disgraceful list of pensions, the mal-administration of his favourite Buckingham—such were the topics that saluted his astonished ears. In his wrath, he adopted that most irritating practice of menacing this august body, which he never could be persuaded to abandon, and which, more perhaps than all other causes, hastened on the crisis of his fate. He sent them word that “if they would not give a present answer, he would take more care of their health than they themselves seemed disposed to take;” “that it should be worse for them,” &c.

Such were his messages and letters to every one of his parliaments, on similar occasions. To his second it was thus:—“If you do not immediately vote your subsidy, you will force me to take other resolutions.” To his third:—“If you will not now do your duty in contributing what the state at this time needs, I must use those other means which God has put into my hands. Take not this as a threat; I scorn to threaten any one but my equals,” &c. &c. To which the Lord Keeper, his messenger, added, “If these means be deferred, necessity and the sword may make way for others. Remember his Majesty’s admonition; I say, remember it!” The epithet of “Vipers,” which in his fury he applied publicly to the brave patriots who most distinguished themselves in the cause of liberty in the house, was but a prelude to his personal attempt to seize and crush these vipers.

The proceedings of this eventful reign it belongs not to our plan or our limits to trace at large. We can only glance even at their progress and nature. The great demand of Charles was for money, which the Commons would not grant without the redress

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of the popular grievances. These were many and serious. The levying of forces without act of parliament, the imprisonment of those who refused to pay such illegal taxes, and detention in prison without cause shown but his special command, in direct violation of Magna Charta and the act of Habeas Corpus; the trying and putting to death of private subjects by military law, and the protection of the judges in such trials by the king's commission; the hiring of foreign mercenary troops, to bring them into this kingdom without consent of parliament; the imposition of gross monopolies; the mal-administration of favourites; the forcing of men's consciences; and the illegal courts of the Star-Chamber and High Commission, where they were sentenced to heavy fines, long imprisonments, tortures and mutilations of person, as branding, cutting off of noses, and lopping of ears," &c.

To these demands Charles replied with threats such as we have noticed, with dismissal of parliament, and in the interim proceeded to exercise all the unconstitutional and offensive acts complained of. To enable him to effect his purposes, he adopted that practice of corrupting men by offers of higher promotion in church and state, which has ever since been so effectually followed out. He found no lack of greedy parsons and lawyers ready to mount the ladder of promotion over the heads of their seniors, over their own early protestations of liberty, over the bodies and blood of their fellow-citizens, and the destruction of the dearest rights of their country. Such men were the lawyers, Noy, Lyttleton, Sir Dudley Digges, Richardson, and others, who, from hot patriots, under the corrupting influences of royal promises, soon became as hot advocates of slavery.

The language which these impudent renegades uttered before parliament in praise of royal tyranny is equal to any of the finest specimens of tartarean eloquence, which we have been doomed to hear in our time. "If," said Lord Keeper Coventry, in the very opening speech of Charles's first parliament, "we consider aright, and think of *that incomprehensible distance between the supreme height and majesty of a mighty monarch and the submissive awe and lowliness of loyal subjects*, we cannot but receive exceeding comfort and contentment in the frame and constitution of this highest court, wherein not only the prelates, nobles, and grandees, but the commons of all degrees, have their part, and wherein *that high majesty doth descend* to admit, or rather to invite, the humblest of his subjects to confer and counsel with him."

After the king had done without parliaments for eleven years, and in the interim had committed many of his most flagrant outrages on the constitution and people, Lord Keeper Finch,

another of those legal renegades, in opening parliament, pronounced Charles "the most just, most pious, the most gracious king that ever was, whose kingly resolutions were seated in the ark of his royal heart;" and went on, in equally fulsome language, to tell them that "it was a presumption of too high a nature for any Uzziah to lay his hand on this ark;" and that they were not, like Phaëton, to attempt to guide the chariot of his royal son. On the trial of Hampden, the judges held equally infamous language. According to them, the king was above all law, statutes, and parliaments. The monarchy they barefacedly declared was "an absolute monarchy;" "and this power is not in any way derived," said the attorney-general, "from the people, but reserved to the king when positive laws first began. The king of England, he is an absolute monarch; nothing can be given to an absolute prince but what is inherent in his own person. He can do no wrong. He is the sole judge, and one ought not to question him." When it was objected that the king could take nothing from the people without act of parliament, Justice Berkeley exclaimed, "The law knows no such king-yoking policy! The law itself is an old and trusty servant of the king's; it is his instrument or means which he useth to govern his people by. I never heard or read that *Lex* was *Rex*, but it is common and most true that *Rex* is *Lex*."

Judges Croke and Hutton must be excepted from this base list. Croke, with ruin staring him in the face for his honesty, boldly stood out, and declared against the unlawfulness of ship-money, and his brave-hearted wife supported him in his noble course. Hutton joined him.

Such was the traitorous language, however, of the renegade law-climbers; and the church-climbers were not behind them. Bishop Williams told Charles, on Strafford's trial, "that there was a private and a public conscience;" and that "the public conscience of a king might dispense with the obligations of his private conscience." And directly thereupon this base counsellor was made Archbishop of York.

But all these men were but reptiles in size and poisonous mischief to the two arch-traitors and counsellors of this infatuated king—Laud and Wentworth. These two men, whom Charles had raised from low estate for their unexampled qualities of renegadism and daring labours for the great object of this reign, the overthrow of the British Constitution, the one to be Archbishop of Canterbury, the other Earl of Strafford, drove on their king and their work of tyranny till they brought him and themselves to the block. They worked shoulder to shoulder in church and state to reduce all to slavery. They had adopted a cant

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term between them to express what they aimed at, and the means by which they pursued it. It was "the thorough," *i.e.*, thorough-going, or, as the Americans have in their slang of late termed it—"going the whole hog." They pledged themselves to aid and encourage one another in the "thorough." Laud's proceedings, are too notorious to require more than the slightest recapitulation. He would have uniformity of religion in all parts of the empire, and in all the colonies; and this uniformity should be as near popery as possible; even proposing to restore the celebration of mass, which, however, the clergy violently rebelled against. He restored the altars to their popish position; the lights, the genuflections, and the consecrations. He was therefore flatteringly styled by the Tory University of Oxford—"His Holiness; Summus Pontifex; Spiritu Sancto effusissime plenus. Archangelus et ne quid minus."

His violent forcing of episcopacy on Scotland roused that kingdom into an uproar, and brought the Covenanters into union with the English Puritans, and eventually the Scotch army into England, commencing that war which ended in Charles's destruction. At home he was not only Primate, but Chancellor of the Exchequer. He dragged every man who dared to oppose him into the Star Chamber; fined, branded, racked, set in the pillory; whipped through the streets, cut off ears and noses of gentlemen, as the well-known histories of Prynne, Bastwick, John Lilburne, and others testify. He did this not merely for religious, but civil causes; for the mere publication of a book against plays, as a pamphlet of "News from Ipswich;" for he was also censor of the press; and he and Wentworth, one at the right ear and the other at the left, breathed into Charles the most hardy devotion to the "thorough."

Wentworth was one of the most barefaced of renegades. He had thundered louder than any man in parliament for liberty; for he was a man of consummate abilities: but no sooner was the proud height to which he might climb on the traitor's ladder pointed out to him, than he rapidly underwent the state transmutations of President of the North, Privy Counsellor, Baron, Viscount, and finally, Earl Wentworth and lord deputy of Ireland. In that country, he told Charles, "he would make him as absolute a king as any prince in the world could be." * He set about to corrupt, intimidate, and mould the Irish parliament into his obsequious tool. He fell on vast estates in the province of Connaught, on pretence that they had been forfeited to the crown. He summoned juries to decide on the king's right to them, telling them that if they brought in any other verdict, "he would fine

* Strafford Letters.

them at a sound rate;" and when they were not conformable, he dragged them into his Star Chamber,—the Castle-chamber, fined them 4000*l.* a-piece, and marched troops into Galway to seize on the estates of such as resisted the king's will. Nobles and gentlemen were thus treated, and Charles said that he cordially approved of his proceedings. All this time, as now appears by the Strafford Letters, left in the handwriting of these traitors themselves, Laud was exciting and hurrying Wentworth on, and Wentworth was showing, that when these things were accomplished and the army which he was raising was complete, the same work might be done in England. He told the king that, having got from the judges a declaration of the lawfulness of ship-money, he had got a great thing; but that still the crown would only stand on one leg unless he got the like power declared for raising a standing army; and asked "What should deter a king from a path which so manifestly, so directly led to the establishment of his throne, and *the secure and independent seating of himself and posterity in wealth, strength, and glory far above any of their progenitors*; verily, in such a condition as there was no more hereafter to be wished them in this world?"

Laud writes Strafford, "For the state, my lord, I am for thorough . . . I am glad to hear your lordship so resolute, and more to hear you affirm, that the footing of those that go thorough for our master's service, is not upon ice as it hath been . . . I am certain it is. If we grow not faint; if we ourselves be not in fault; if we come not to a *peccatum ex te, Israel*; if others will do their parts thoroughly, as you promise for yourself, and justly conceive of me. . . . As for my marginal note, I see you decypher it well; and I see you make use of it, too: do so still, thorough and thorough. . . . Oh! that I were where I might go so too! But I am shackled between delays and uncertainties. You have a great deal of honour here for your proceedings; go on, in God's name."*

But thanks be to God, there was now a glorious little host of men who were as bold and determined to go "Thorough" in the cause of freedom and law, as these base tools in that of tyranny. Hampden, Pym, Prynne, Selden, St. John, Denzil Hollis, the Vanes, Milton, Cromwell, and many another great name of that immortal brotherhood, were ready to pull down both them and all their works of infamy. This triumvirate of the divinity of kingship, Charles, Strafford, and Laud, had already tortured, imprisoned, and impoverished many a good man for resistance to their desperate attempts. In Ireland many of high rank had been chased from their peaceful possessions; the old Earl of Clanricarde,

* Strafford Letters, *passim*.

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upwards of eighty years of age, had been brought to a heart-broken grave. In England, how numerous had been the victims! Besides the notorious cases of Prynne, Bastwick, Leighton, &c., many of the most eminent members of the House of Commons had been repeatedly imprisoned for their bold speaking, and one of them, Sir John Elliot, had died there. The trial of Hampden for refusing to pay the illegal demand of ship-money set the nation in a flame, which consumed the despots; but what numbers had before this been fleeced and persecuted for the same cause! Richard Chambers, a merchant, for refusing to pay further duty on a bale of silk than the legal demand, had been harassed and fined in the Star Chamber, imprisoned for the greater part of his life, and totally ruined, so that he died in want.

Such were the men and the deeds which there have not been found wanting men in our time to defend and even canonise. How glorious was the scene when the House of Commons rose in its might, and by impeachment brought down one proud head after another! Finch, the renegade, Windebank, the bloodhound of Laud, dropped the strutting honours of Lord Keeper and Secretary of State, and fled hastily from the wrath to come. The several judges who had sate proudly on the trial of John Hampden, declaring the king absolute, and the royal demand of ship-money good law, were plucked from their absurd eminence; ay, Berkeley, who had exclaimed that "the law knew no king-yoking policy," but that *Rex was Lex*, from the very judgment seat, as he sate in his ermine, amid judges and lawyers, was ordered down and taken away as a felon, to receive the censure of parliament, and pay a fine of 10,000*l*.

Never was there such a scene in the history of nations. The effect was that of magic. It was as if a thunderbolt had fallen in the midst of the reptile advocates of national slavery. They fell flat, and licked the feet of their chasteners. There was an instant hush of all praises of despotism, and exhortations to illegal taxation, like that which, in a populous city, follows the explosion of a mine; and the whole fabric of absolutism, as has been excellently observed by a modern writer, "was shattered like a house of glass, or melted like a fabric of ice or snow on the return of the summer sun." * Nay, it dropped at once on a heap, like a house of cards. "Within less than six weeks," says Clarendon, "these terrible reformers had caused the two greatest counsellors of the kingdom, Laud and Strafford, whom they most feared, and so hated, to be removed from the king, and imprisoned under an accusation of high treason; and

* Knight's History.

frightened away the Lord Keeper of the great seal of England, and one of the principal Secretaries of State into foreign kingdoms, for fear of the like; besides preparing all the lords of the council, and very many of the principal gentlemen throughout England, who had been sheriffs and deputy lieutenants, to expect such measure of punishment from their general votes and resolutions as their future demeanour should draw upon them for their past offences."

And now having, as they stated in their celebrated "Remonstrance," put an end to ship-money, coat and service money, monopolies and illegal taxation; having quelled the actors of the mischiefs, beheaded Strafford, put to flight Finch and Windebank; imprisoned the Archbishop of Canterbury; impeached divers other bishops and judges; extorted a new law, that they should not be dissolved or adjourned without their own consent; suppressed for ever the Star Chamber, the High Commission Court, the Presidency of the North, "which were so many forges of misery, oppression, and violence, but now all happily taken away;" having curbed the immoderate power of the Privy Council, and the exorbitant power of bishops; blasted, by the votes of the house, the unholy canons, and the power of canon-making; it required only the insane attempt of the infatuated despot to invade that house with an armed multitude, and to seize the most active promoters of these most glorious reforms;—five names which will always stand bravely in the face of our history, Denzil Hollis, Arthur Hazzlerig, John Pym, John Hampden, and John Strode,—to put the whole kingdom in a blaze. Ireland and Scotland were already driven to rebellion by arbitrary government, and the novel spectacle of a nation in arms against its monarch for the assertion of its freedom, soon fixed the eyes of all the world, and ended in the monarch's destruction and the popular triumph.

I am not writing a history of England, and therefore need not trace the progress of this most important of strifes, and most glorious of all victories; the question we have now to ask is, How did the aristocracy act in the whole of this great conflict, whether conducted in Parliament by the tongue, or in the field by musket and artillery? They acted a poor and pusillanimous part. So far from standing boldly forward for the rights of the nation, they clung miserably to the assumptions of the crown, and where they could, would have supported them had they dared. But they had much to risk; and though they would have curbed the popular cause if they could, they saw better than the doomed king the signs of the times. They beheld a power abroad before which, if fully aroused, crowns

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and coronets would become as so many chimney-pots in a high wind; and they sneaked and crouched. We may notice the following evidences of this.

In Charles's very first parliament, when the Commons refused, until the crying abuses of government should be redressed, to grant tonnage and poundage for more than one year, the Lords flung out the bill because it was not *for life*, which would have made all after-cries for redress useless. The king felt and tacitly acknowledged how much more disposed the Lords were to acquiesce in his pretensions when he ventured to complain to them of the conduct of the Commons in resisting his illegal acts in this affair. "For you, my Lords, I am glad to take this opportunity, and all other occasions by which you may clearly understand both my words and actions; for, as you are nearest in degree, so are you the fittest witnesses of kings. The complaint I speak of is staying men's goods that deny tonnage and poundage;" i.e., for refusing to pay that which the Lords themselves had prevented becoming law, because it could not be perpetual law. In dismissing this parliament, he took care to say—"I declare to you, my Lords, and all the world, that it is only the disobedient carriage of the Lower House that hath caused this dissolution at this time; and that you, my Lords, are so far from being causes of it, that I have as much comfort in your Lordships' carriage towards me, as I have cause to distaste their proceedings."

It was now, while complimenting the Lords, that he termed the patriots of the Commons, "vipers." When the Commons refused the tonnage and poundage for more than one year, the Lords of the Council granted the king writs to take ship-money. When, after eleven long years of arbitrary acts and outrages, after the imprisonment of members, after the trial and persecution of Hampden, after his war against the liberties of Scotland, and attempts to bring over foreign troops to destroy those of England, Charles again, in 1640, called a parliament, and "the vipers" still insisted on the acknowledgment of constitutional restraints, and Charles, in his usual way, promised to give it *after* he had got the grant of money: what did the Lords?—they advised the Commons to consent; told them that, "having the word of a king," and, as some of their lordships were pleased to say, "not only of a king, but a gentleman—they would no more be capable of distrusting him, than they would be capable of the highest undutifulness to him."

Had the Commons taken this traitorous advice, the liberties of England were lost for ever. But there was no fear. The parliament had but sate seven days when, we learn from the royal

renegade, Clarendon himself, this impatience of the court for money was grown to such a height that, regarding the peers as more entirely at the king's disposal, "it hit on this plan of passing a vote in their own house, that supply should take precedence of all other subjects." It was thought, says Clarendon, that the long disuse of parliaments had made men forgetful of its privileges, but this beginning of the peers with an action which their ancestors had never assumed, at once roused the Commons; they declared the Lords' interference about supplies a most grievous breach of their privileges, and the Lords were glad to apologise. Yet, in a very few days, the Lords lent themselves again to the court, sending to the Commons in the very midst of the debate, and with a palpable view to stop it, to desire a conference, which they refused; and again on the following day by Lord Keeper Finch, to warn them of the danger, evils, and calamities they were bringing on their heads by not listening to his majesty, and giving him supplies.

This base and slavish spirit and presumption in counselling them were justly resented by the Commons. They declared that they would never grant supplies till they had a redress of grievances, and till the Lords had made due reparation for their conduct. This brought the king again to a hasty dismissal of Parliament, when he rated the Commons for not taking his word in exchange for their money, and lauded the Peers, as well he might, "for their willing ear and great affection."* By this treason to the constitution, the Lords may be said to have brought about the ruin of the monarchy and their own. Had they at this juncture honestly done their duty, Charles might have taken warning, but having their countenance, he became more fanatic than ever. The very day after the dissolution, he seized and imprisoned the Chairman of the Committee of the House of Commons, Mr. Crew, and two other members, Mr. Bellasis and Sir John Hotham. He had the house and cabinet of Lord Brooke broken open, and searched for papers. Laud went on roundly in Convocation, which continued illegally to sit after the parliament had broken up, with enacting new canons, containing oaths to be imposed on all clergymen and graduates of the universities, that everything necessary to salvation was contained in the doctrine and rites of the Church of England, and against any alteration in the system of government by archbishops, bishops, deacons, &c. More writs than ever were issued for the arbitrary collection of ship-money. All who refused were declared traitors and foes to monarchy. The Lord Mayor and sheriffs of London were dragged into the Star-

* Clarendon.

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Chamber for not showing zeal in these infamous levies, and Strafford, as he had already recommended that Hampden should be *publicly whipped* for his obstinacy, now declared that things would never be right till a few fat aldermen of London were hanged. Bullion was seized in the Tower, bags of pepper at the Exchange, and sold at an under rate. It was proposed to coin 400,000*l.* of base money; and, in fact, such was the madness of government under the implied favour of the Lords, that all men saw that this state of things could not long last.* To crown all, Charles rushed into war with the Commons, and the Lords now saw enough of the consequences of their conduct to take alarm, and twelve of their number presented a petition to the king, representing his danger, the destruction of the kingdom, and praying him to call another parliament. He called that which cut off his head.

The Lords, terrified by the bold attitude and summary impeachments of high personages by the Commons, became still and obsequious for a time; but, as the king proceeded towards hostilities, as there were rumours of designs against the Constitution from France and Ireland, and petitions poured into the Commons, accusing the bishops and popish Lords of being deeply concerned in these, and calling on them to dislodge from places of high trust such suspicious personages as these kept there by their votes, the Commons determined to speak out to the Peers, and sent Pym to them, who addressed them in his usual bold and straightforward strain. He assured them "that they must now declare themselves, and join the Commons in working out the evils of the Commonwealth, or be content to see the Commons do it without them. That their judgments would tell them what they had to do; their consciences, their honours, their interests called upon them for the doing of it. The Commons would be glad of their help and concurrence in the saving of the kingdom; but that if they should fail of it, it should not discourage them from doing their duty. And," proceeded he, in a noble eloquence, "whether the kingdom be lost or saved, as by God's blessing saved I hope it will be, they should be sorry that the story of their present Parliament should tell posterity, that in so great a danger and extremity, the House of Commons should be found to save the kingdom alone, and the House of Peers should have no part in the honour of the preservation of it, you having so great an interest in the good success of their endeavours, in respect of your great estates, and high degree of nobility. My lords, consider what the present necessities and dangers of the Commonweal require, what the Commons have

* Whitelock; Sydney Papers.

reason to expect, to what endeavours and counsels the concurrent desires of all the people do invite you, so that applying yourself to the preservation of the king and kingdom, I may be bold to assure you, in the name of all the Commons of England, that you shall be bravely seconded !” *

But this great, this noble part in the salvation of the Commonwealth they were not to have. The people were struck with admiration of the heroic and truly English address of Pym ; the Commons voted him hearty thanks for it ; the king heard it with startled indignation, and sent to the Commons to know whether such a speech had really been delivered in their name ; to which they boldly replied that it had, and contained their full opinion ; but the peers, poorly weighing the chances of their selfish interests, lost this glorious opportunity of winning the everlasting thanks and gratitude of their country. Had they now come forward, civil war, and the king's death, and the fall of the monarchy might still have been prevented ; they meanly temporised till they saw the king in arms, when, judging from the cavaliers who flocked to him, that he would beat the unpractised Commons, no less than forty of their boldest and highest members ran off to him, and the rest remained to be dragged along in a tame and yet unwilling yoke, watching for the hour when they could desert the common cause too. The names of the first deserters, who bound themselves in a solemn bond to defend the king against all parties, should stand in all records of aristocratic proceedings, and they are these :—The Lord Keeper Littleton ; Duke of Richmond ; Marquis of Hertford ; Earls of Lindsay, Cumberland, Huntingdon, Bath, Southampton, Dorset, Salisbury, Northampton, Devonshire, Bristol, Westmoreland, Berkshire, Monmouth, Rivers, Newcastle, Dover, Caernarvon, Newport ; Lords Mowbray and Maltravers, Willoughby of Eresby, Rich, Howard of Charlton, Newark, Paget, Chandois, Falconbridge, Paulet, Lovelace, Coventry, Savill, Mohun, Dunsmore, Seymour, Grey of Ruthven, the Comptroller, Secretary Nicholas, Sir John Culpepper, Lord Chief Justice Banks.

While the army, the great body of the people, the navy, the common sailors especially, who on all occasions have shown themselves eminently patriotic, but on this occasion were also incensed by Charles's contemptuous application of the term “ water-rats ” to them, all declared for laws and liberty, the Lords continued slipping away at every opportunity to the king and his army, whither their sons and dissolute connections had already flocked by thousands, having been too long detained by parliament from their accustomed aliment of national plunder.

* Rushworth.

Some of these desertions, however, were made so late, as those of the Earls of Bedford, Clare, and Holland, that Charles repulsed them as traitors, and they fled back to the parliament amidst the laughter of the patriots. "But this scapade and a thousand other things and circumstances," says the historian, "sunk the House of Lords generally in public estimation." It continued to sink, till it was covered with universal contempt, while the Commons rose in victory and power; and at length, when the latter house determined to bring the king to trial for his offences against the nation, it was found that but few members of the upper house remained visible. The majority had fought and been beaten with the king; some had, like the Marquis of Newcastle, fled timidly abroad till the storm should be over; others skulked in retired places; and the few who had kept up a show of meeting in the House, on being invited by the Commons to join them in the prosecution, stole away, and *the Commons voted the PEERS A NULLITY*, and the people's house as the people's real and full representatives.*

The moment that the Commonwealth was established the Lords met again, and would fain have been recognised as a part of the government, but the Commons treated them and their repeated messages with deserved contempt, and voted them "dangerous and useless;" to such a state of merited ignominy had they fallen. Cromwell afterwards summoned what was called "the other house," which was composed of a mixture of peers and commoners; but the peers were too proud to sit with brewers and drapers, men with three times more sense than themselves; and this second, or "other house," never acquired any respect or importance. Thus, during the Commonwealth, the Lords remained a really contemptible and "useless" body; but when the reprobate, Charles II., was to be brought in, they instinctively snuffed afar the return of honours and spoil, were in close communication with the traitor, Monk, who sold the Commonwealth to make himself a titled aristocrat, or Earl of Albemarle; nay, they were only too eager to rush in and become art and part in the disgraceful contract, actually, as we shall presently show, selling the country and constitution, the liberties, property, and privileges of the nation at large to this wretched royal debauchee, for a special bargain of profitable exemptions to themselves. This done, the people saw them, as the harbingers of monarchy, suddenly emerge from their hiding-places, and crowd again into their upper house.

The whole history of the aristocracy during this memorable

* Rushworth; Herbert; Whitelock.

period is, indeed, a lamentable one ; but the nation discovered a great fact through it. They saw that a class of effeminate aristocrats had no power either to defend themselves or the monarchy. They saw that they had neither the virtue to stand by the people, nor the vigour to stand by the crown and their own order. They saw that all the real power and intellect lay with the people. That all that was done, was done by the men who were sprung, as it were, from the vigorous soil of their native country ; by the men who boasted no titles but that of Englishmen ; men whose hearts were warm with the healthy blood of the commonalty, and whose arms and souls were strung to invincible might by the pursuits of trade, or the chase, and above all, by manly daring and enterprise for the common cause. All that had been won from the grasp of an audacious despotism,—and what was not won at this era?—all of liberty that we now possess, and much that we again have lost,—THE RECOGNITION OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF PARLIAMENT ; the abolition of all illegal courts ; the repudiation of all but parliamentary taxation ; THE BILL OF RIGHTS, confirming Magna Charta, and more than Magna Charta ; THE EXPULSION OF BISHOPS FROM THE HOUSE OF LORDS ; the grant of freedom of religious opinion ; all these victories of peace, and all the victories of a war which succeeded and established them,—these were the glorious achievements of THE MEN OF THE PEOPLE, of THE COMMONS OF ENGLAND !

The peers could glitter in the train of royalty in the time of courtly pageantry ; and they could bring in again a royal profligate by treachery ; but they could neither stand stoutly for their factitious rights and honours, nor would lend a hand to win for this great nation, of which they pretended to be the ornament and the pure blood, its everlasting charter of everlasting liberty. Even the few members of this body who had the honesty to strike for the common cause, proved imbecile. The Essexes, and Warwicks, and Manchesters, who were put at the head of armies and navies, out of compliment to their rank, were soon found to be mere babies in intellect, mere dwarfs in the stature of genius compared with the *Teros Filii*—the Cromwells, the Skiptons, the Wallers—and the war might have languished, or tyranny been triumphant, had they not been set aside, for these fiery-hearted commanders on land, and the immortal Drake on the sea. Lord Fairfax is the sole individual of all this showy and proud body whose name presents an honourable exception, and whose mild and patriotic fame will always be dear to Englishmen.

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CHAPTER XIII.

"I warn the Aristocracy not to force the people to look into the subject of taxation,—not to force them to see how they have been robbed, plundered, and bamboozled for ages by them."—RICHARD CORDEN, at *Covent Garden*, Dec. 17th, 1845.

It has been the jubilant vaunt of toryism, that the people of England had a taste of democracy, and had enough of it. That the Commonwealth had introduced such troubles and distractions and distresses into the kingdom, that all men were transported at the idea of the return of a king. It is not now our question which form of government is the best, and we may be excused entering far into the discussion of it; but we must not permit a vulgar error to damage the cause of freedom, and must therefore state plainly, what is the recorded truth.

A republic is, in my opinion, the most perfect form of human government, and the most consonant to every rational view of our nature, or of our rights, and of the economy of a civil community; but it is equally true, that it is a government only for men in the most perfect state. Before this noble form of government, most noble and worthy of free and independent men, can be satisfactorily and firmly maintained, men must have learned much of the true science of civil rule, and made it practicable. They must have learned to work by moral means and principles, and not by swords and muskets; they must have become, from reading, from reasoning, and from active discussion of private and public rights, keenly sensible, not only of their own claims, but of the claims of others; they must have learned to respect themselves, and to respect the rights of their neighbours, be they indeed their opponents. The divine sentiment of JUSTICE must have become a CONSCIENCE; the divine law of LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF, must have become a GOSPEL in them. They must have become habitually able to put their own passions and selfish views under the controlling and INVIOABLE sense of the common good. Till men are thus enlightened, and thus practically disciplined, there will be faction instead of good government, and private ambition instead of public service. Till this knowledge and this discipline are those too not of a number, even of a large number, but of the mass of the people, the vicious adventurer will outstrip modest ability; private stratagem will defeat public virtue; and there will always be agitation and

danger of relapse. Monarchy is the necessary evil of a low state of moral sentiment in a community. It is a compliance with that weak spirit of a poor idolatry which has always displayed itself in the cloudy mind of the vulgar mass, beginning with the adoration of ugly wooden stumps carved and vermilioned, and ending in that of *golden calves*; not the rational homage of god-illumined intellect, which can worship nothing on this side of heaven. It is the schoolmaster with his rod, awing and chastising ill-disciplined children, not the leader of great and wise men. It is at once the badge and the punishment of an imperfect or a corrupt civilisation. A republic, on the contrary, is the most perfect and humane of governments, it implies self-government, and the national embodiment of Christianity, and is therefore the glory of human nature, but, as is evident, can only stand fast on the pyramidal basis of the knowledge and virtue of a whole people.

This latter condition was assuredly not that of England at this time. The cause of knowledge and its offspring, virtue, was but in its growth, but it was a glorious growth, and produced triumphs such as had never before been witnessed in the history of man, and which can never again be utterly lost. The nation had been insulted and oppressed; but there were in it many men glowing with all the ideas of liberty derived from the study of the classics, and of that great fountain of all liberty, the Bible. These champions, endowed with an extraordinary wealth of eloquence, bravery, and ability, stood forward dauntlessly for the nation. Their words were words of fire which kindled the excited spirits of their countrymen. They won the ear, and heart, and soul of the million. The enthusiasm grew with opposition; the strife came, and in the contest liberty triumphed, and despotism fell. But the great men who fought this glorious battle were not immortal. They perished in the field, or in the course of nature, and it was then seen that in them, and not in the nation at large, had the great ideal of the reign of freedom been realised. The nation loved freedom, but was far from being prepared to comprehend all that pertained to its maintenance. These men were lights from the regions of the past, which their countrymen had not yet sufficiently explored; they had filled their souls with the philosophy of Greece, strengthened them with the fortitude of Rome, and clarified them to a more than eagle's clearness of vision into the true principles of things, in the divine fountain of Bethlehem; they had thus shot far ahead of their age, and when they fell, freedom for a time fell with them.

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the republican party, or because prosperity was departing under their rule, that the people again hailed the return of monarchy, is opposed to all facts. It was not that they groaned under the heavy yoke of the Commonwealth, and remembered the good days which they enjoyed under their kings, but precisely the reverse, which induced them with joy to admit Charles to the throne. They had, in fact, enjoyed of late years so much prosperity and security, and especially freedom of religion, that the memory of former monarchical persecutions and exactions had grown faint. They saw with Cromwell's death the firm hand which preserved their peace gone; most of the great men of the revolution had gone before; and they trembled at the distractions of feeble successors, while they were induced to hope from a king, whose father had lost his head for his despotism, and who himself had suffered much adversity, a better and milder rule than that of his ancestors.

Never, indeed, had the people of England enjoyed so much respect abroad, or prosperity at home, as under the rule of the Protector. At first the ambassadors and subjects of England were insulted in every country on the continent; some of them were murdered; but Cromwell soon compelled all foreigners to alter their tone and behaviour. By the hand of Drake, his immortal admiral, he drove from the ocean the fleets of Holland, France, and Spain;—those of Holland being such for number, fame of commanders, De Witt and Van Tromp, and for the desperate valour of the men, as never came against England before. He made the name of England terrible in all countries, and all kings and governments did him homage. At home he preserved peace, gave freedom to religious faith, and put the whole commerce and constitution of England into such a posture, that the statistical returns of the latter part of his government, and the period immediately succeeding it, present results that are perfectly amazing. "All authorities," says a late writer, "agree in testifying to the prosperity which England enjoyed from the termination of the war to the death of Cromwell."*—"When this tyrant, or Protector, as some call him," observes a writer after the Restoration, "turned out the Long Parliament in April, 1653, the kingdom was arrived at the highest pitch of trade, wealth, and honour that it in any age ever knew. The trade appeared by the great sums offered them for the Customs and Excise, 900,000*l.* a-year being refused. The riches of the nation showed itself in the high value that land and all our native commodities bore, which are the certain marks of opulence."†

* Knight's History of England.

† The World's Mistake in Oliver Cromwell; Harleian Miscellany.

Even the population, spite of the disturbances and slaughters of the civil war, had advanced. It is calculated at the commencement of the civil war, at six millions, and at the Restoration at not less than six millions and a half. "The hurricane of the civil war," says the writer of Knight's History, "disastrous as it may have been in its immediate operation, had yet put a new life into the air, the inspiration of which, on the return of a settled condition of things, was felt by our commerce and manufactures, as well as by all other parts of our social system; the very gap to be filled up, in consequence of the partial suspension of mercantile and other industrial activity during the war, quickened that activity when the war was over. The government of the protectorate exerted itself to promote the trading interests of the country, and the impulse thus given continued to carry forward the spirit of enterprise after the Restoration in a state of greater public security, and under circumstances otherwise much more favourable than had existed previous to that event."

As evidences of this impulse, we may state that between the Restoration and the revolution, the Custom-house receipts doubled themselves, being in 1660 only 421,582*l.*, and in 1687, 884,955*l.* Davenant gives the value of the whole rental of England in 1660, at six millions; in 1688, at fourteen millions.* So that in 1660, the whole land of England, at twelve years' purchase, was only worth 72,000,000*l.*; and in 1668, at eighteen years' purchase, 254,000,000*l.*; or three and a half times as much. As to the mercantile shipping of the country, old and experienced merchants all agreed, that its tonnage in 1688, was nearly double what it had been in 1666; and it appeared by authentic accounts, that the royal navy, which, in 1666, amounted only to 62,594 tons, was grown in 1688 to 101,032 tons. Sir William Petty in his Political Arithmetic, published 1676, states, that within the previous forty years, the houses in London had doubled themselves; the royal navy had doubled or quadrupled itself; the coal-trade from Newcastle had quadrupled itself, being then 80,000 tons yearly; the Guinea and American trades had grown up from next to nothing above 40,000 tons of shipping; the Customs were tripled; the postage of letters increased from one to twenty; the whole income of government, in short, was trebled, and the number and splendour of coaches, equipages, and household furniture was wonderfully increased.

These effects were surely no results of the wise measures of such monarchs as Charles II. and James II.; they were trace-

* Discourses on Trade.

able, as clearly as light to the sun, to the bold and able heads of the Long Parliament and the Commonwealth; to their victories over the enemies and rivals of the nation; and to the able regulations which they had made in all quarters for the honourable maintenance of our name and the prosperity of our commerce.

But the aristocracy were sighing for the return of monarchy, and by conspiracy with the army they effected it. And how did they effect it? The story forms one of the darkest and most disgraceful spots in our history. The aristocracy determined at any rate and cost to have the monarchy back again, as the only chance of regaining their old privileges of plundering the nation. For this purpose they cast their eyes on General Monk. They soon found that he was the man for their object. They found that he was a man to be tempted by promises of rank, title, and fortune; and these were plentifully made him. It is well known that great bargainings went on between the English aristocracy previous to the Restoration; and these being terminated to the satisfaction of the two parties, the dissolute prince was hastily admitted again to the throne, without any securities being taken for the preservation of the national liberties. The aristocracy had gained their own selfish ends; Monk had gained his, and became Duke of Albemarle. The aristocracy had set up again the golden tree of monarchy, under whose branches only their power and privileges were safe, and whose golden apples they have made to rain so plentifully into their hands. But with this grand and fundamental acquisition they were not contented; they took care to make a special bargain for themselves, and this was nothing less than to exempt themselves from their feudal obligations, their military tenures, the proceeds of which constituted, in fact, a land-tax; and to throw this burden not merely from themselves, but upon the shoulders of the unsuspecting people, in the shape of the Excise.

Of this singular, base, and selfish transaction on the part of the aristocracy, we get a pretty clear view from Blackstone. He reminds us of the imposition of the various feudal burdens by William the Conqueror on those of his followers, to whom, according to the feudal system, he granted lands. For every grant of a certain quantity of land, called a knight's feud, fief, or fee, the said grantee was bound to do personal service in the army of the grantor, or feudal lord, forty days in every year, if called upon. "But this personal attendance growing troublesome in many respects, the tenants found means of compounding for it by first sending others in their stead, and in process of time, by making pecuniary satisfaction to the crown in lieu of

it. This pecuniary satisfaction came to be levied by assessment, at so much for every knight's fee, under the name of *scutages*.*

But this knight-service, as it was called, involved also other exactions, taxes, and subjections, as first, Aids, or sums to be paid by the tenant to ransom his lord if taken prisoner, to make his eldest son a knight, and to marry his eldest daughter. "To which," adds Blackstone, "the tyranny of lords by degrees exacted more and more, as aids to pay the lord's debts, aids to enable him to pay aids, or reliefs to his superior lord, from which last the king's tenants, *in capite*, of course were exempt, as they held immediately of the king, who had no superior, but were paid by those who, according to the feudal system, received grants at second or third hand: Second, RELIEFS, or fines paid to the lord by the new tenant on taking up his land upon the death of the father, or old tenant: Third, PRIMER SEISIN; which was paid only by the king's tenants *in capite*, and was a whole year's profits of the estate, or *first fruits*, afterwards by the avarice of the popes demanded from the clergy: Fourth, WARDSHIP; or the custody of the body and estate of minors who held under the king. This not only implied that the lord had custody of the body and lands of the ward, without giving any accounts of the profits, till the male ward was twenty-one, and the female sixteen; but also the right to give them in marriage, or to levy heavy exactions on them."—"These," continues he, "were the principal qualities, fruits, and consequences of tenure by knight-service, or *tenure by which the greatest part of the lands in these kingdoms were holden, and that principally of the king in capite*, till the middle of the last century."

"The families of all our nobility and gentry," says he, "groaned under these intolerable burdens, which, in consequence of the fiction adopted after the conquest, were introduced and laid upon them by the subtlety and finesse of the Norman lawyers. For," adds he, summing up the facts to which we have referred,—"*besides the scutages to which they were liable, in defect of personal attendance, which, however, were assessed by themselves in parliament, they might be called upon by the king, or lord paramount, for aids, whenever his eldest son was to be knighted, or his eldest daughter married; not to forget the ransom of his own person. The heir, on the death of his ancestor, if of full age, was plundered of the first emoluments, arising from his inheritance, by way of relief and primer seisin; and, if under age, of the whole of his estate during infancy. Add to this the untimely and expensive honour of knighthood.*"†

* Commentaries, B. I. ch. viii. p. 309. † Com. B. II. ch. v. 7, pp. 767.

But the simple fact is, that these were the natural burdens of these lands. They were the conditions attending these magnificent grants from the crown of, as he admits, "the greatest part of the lands in these kingdoms." They were by Magna Charta secured to be assessed and regulated by these landholders themselves in Parliament. Burdensome and irritating, therefore, as were many of these conditions, they were not, as a whole, at all disproportionate to the vast benefit given and enjoyed—that of the bulk of the lands of these realms. The annoyances and real hardships of them were capable of being rooted out by act of Parliament. But this was not what the aristocracy wanted. They wanted to retain the splendid gift, and get rid of the whole mass of conditions by which it was clogged in the bestowal.

When the people, now-a-days cry out for abolition of tithes, the aristocracy, and their sons and kinsmen, the clergy, tell us that we have bought our estates subject to this burden, and that it is nothing but fair and proper that we bear it. That the tithes are not, nor ever were, a portion of our property. But very different were their feeling and mode of reasoning as to their own natural burden, the feudal services. These services and payments, were, in truth, the reservations made by the crown, on giving away these lands, for the maintenance of the crown and the government of the country. They were the composition of the aristocracy to the necessary taxation of the realm, or in Blackstone's own words, "were in the nature of a modern land-tax."* The aristocracy, therefore, wanted neither less nor more than to get rid of their whole land-tax, and fling the necessary burden of taxation on the people. They attempted this, it seems, in James I.'s days, and Blackstone tells us that James had, in fact, consented, for a proper equivalent (*i.e.*, an equivalent tax drawn from the people), to exchange the military tenures for general fee-farm rent; "an expedient," says Blackstone, "much better than the hereditary excise." But that scheme with James came to nothing, and it was only when the aristocracy had Charles II. at an advantage, that they hit on the happy idea of freeing themselves entirely from the stipulated burdens on their lands. They succeeded. The dissolute and needy prince was ready to make any terms for the crown of England; the bargain was struck; and, to use Blackstone's own words, "the military tenures, with all their heavy appendages, were destroyed at one blow by the statute, 12 Car. II. c. 24, which enacts—'That the court of wards and liveries, and all

* Book I. ch. viii. p. 309.

wardships, liveries, primer seisin, and ouster le mains, values, and forfeitures of marriages, by reason of any tenure of the king or others, be totally taken away; and that all fines for alienations, tenures by homage, knights-service, and escuage, and also aids for marrying the daughter, or knighting the son, and all tenures of the king *in capite*, be likewise taken away; and that also all sorts of tenures held of the king or others, be turned into free and common escharge; save only in tenures in frankalmoin, copyholds, and the honorary services (without the slavish part) of grand serjeantry.* A statute, which was a greater acquisition to the civil property of this kingdom than our Magna Charta itself; since that only pruned the luxuriances that had grown out of the military tenures, and thereby preserved them in vigour; but the statute of King Charles extirpated the whole, and demolished both root and branches.”†

Thus did the aristocracy, as our commentator says, “at one blow,” abolish the original compact and conditions by which they acquired possession of all their lands, the half of the soil of England; getting rid, at the same time, of the heavy rights of purveyance and of subsidies on those lands. By this act they established that extraordinary value of their landed property which has made them at the present day the most astoundingly opulent and powerful aristocracy that ever existed; and has enabled them by this overwhelming wealth and power to overthrow the balance of the constitution, and thrust the people out of their rights, and their house of representatives. And by what means? By the traitorous means of giving as an equivalent for their unnatural burdens, a burden on the people—the Excise!—“King Charles at his restoration, consented, by the same statute, to resign entirely those branches of his revenue and power; and the parliament, in part of recompense, settled on him, his heirs and successors for ever, the hereditary excise of fifteen pence per barrel on all beer and ale sold in the kingdom, and a proportionate sum for certain other liquors, so that this hereditary excise now forms the sixth branch of his Majesty’s ordinary revenue.”† “The excise having been long established, and its produce well known, some part of it was given to the crown in 12 Car. II., by way of recompense, as before observed, for the feudal tenures, and the oppressive parts of the hereditary revenue.”

This transaction between the most debauched and unprincipled prince and the selfish aristocracy that restored him, should never be forgotten when the Restoration is spoken of. It

* B. II. ch. v., p. 77.

† B. I. ch. viii. p. 289.

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should then and for ever be remembered at what cost to the nation it was made. How the proper resources of the crown from the landholders were filched away by those landholders, as the price of the monarch's return, put for ever into their own pockets, and the pockets of the people fathomed by the excise-man's stick to make up the deficiency ; so that the people are actually bearing all those burdens for the aristocracy which were the price of all their land !

What is well to be remarked is that, while the aristocracy thus freed themselves from their obligations towards their feudal lord, the king, they took care not to free their tenants from their obligations towards them. The copyholders were excepted.

But their selfish proceedings did not end here. Having removed all taxation from themselves, the amount of which was actually half the revenue of the whole country, and laid it on the people, they managed to get from William III., a stranger and a foreigner, almost all his crown lands, either in gifts or on long leases, thus making the crown dependent on themselves. When it was found that the crown, deprived of the land revenues and of its own estates, could not carry on the public business, a land tax was obliged to be imposed. But this they took care was but a light one, and in fact for the main part, falling on personal property. As their lands grew rapidly in value, through those exemptions and the industry of the people, this tax would have, notwithstanding, grown to something considerable ; and therefore, what did the aristocracy ? They passed an act in 1797, declaring that the land tax should only be levied on the original assessment of William III. ! Thus, while their land has been rising to tenfold the value of that period, and the taxation on the people has risen from 400,000*l.* a-year, to *Fifty Millions a-year*, the land tax has stood stationary from 1797, at 2,037,627*l.* ! Not content with this, they crowned all by imposing the Corn Laws, so as to compel the already oppressed and defrauded people to pay them in the purchase of bread, an artificial and enormous rent for their lands. They had heaped taxation like a mountain on the people, yet they would not allow them cheap bread. There is no history of impudent and greedy imposition in the world like this. But I have only touched on its outlines ; I shall return to it again in one of the latter chapters of this volume.

The *parliament* which Blackstone speaks of was, moreover, that parliament packed by the crown and aristocracy for their own purposes at the Restoration, called the Convention parliament, and by which they imposed on the abused people, under the form of law, the grossest impositions. In the momentary

delusion of the people, which, however, again was soon dissipated by the follies and crimes of both crown and coronet, it would have seemed difficult to decide whether the nation or the monarch had learned the least from experience. But the monarch had learned nothing but debauchery. The nation soon discerned that it had brought upon itself a proper infliction in a more worthless tyrant than it had ever had before; and it did eight-and-twenty years of severe penance before it chased his miserable family for ever from the kingdom.

Charles had made himself contemptible by his low and profligate habits on the continent, and brought with him a flood of vice which, by corrupting our literature, may be said to have left its effects behind it to this day. We need not trace his character or career at much length; but the effect of the violent reaction and vengeance of humbled aristocracy and toryism, and the condition of vice, dishonour, and slavery to which they reduced this unhappy kingdom, are too instructive to be entirely passed over. Charles and his aristocracy returned to this country as a horrible incarnation of blood, lust and despotism. Their advent was an Avater of horrors and humiliations to the national character that should stand as an eternal warning to Englishmen. Let us note these melancholy demonstrations in a new chapter,

CHAPTER XIV.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE RESTORATION.

THE king before returning, had promised in what is called "The Declaration of Breda," "indemnity for the past, and liberty of conscience for the future." He pretended to fling all vengeance to the winds, and granted a free pardon to all, except such as, not himself, but the parliament should except. The simple people with evidence enough before their eyes, that Charles's father had never cared a straw for his word, and plenty of evidence too, that Charles himself had no principle at all, that he was a debauchee, and debauchees are proverbially cruel, gave full evidence to his hollow professions, never dreaming that the *parliament* which had effected the great changes of the last reign and of the Commonwealth, would give up to vengeance the men who had been its leaders and instruments. King and aristocrats came back furious at their past humiliations, and burning with

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a deadly and unappeasable thirst of revenge. The parliament was composed of all the cavaliers, Tories, and those meaner spirits of the late parliament, which hoped by servile baseness to win indemnity for their former deeds; and who flocked together at the first news of the restoration. Those were materials after Charles's own heart, and they soon stepped up to the knees in blood; they hastened to gratify the worthless tyrant with denouncing the judges of his father; then, the most patriotic officers of the army, and members of the former parliament and government. First, four were to be excepted from the pardon, then seven, then ten, then twenty; and so on it went, till blood flowed on all sides; beheading, hanging, drawing and quartering, and all the horrors of the most barbarous ages were in full activity in that England which had so lately shown to the world such philosophic principles of government, and such a warning to worthless kings. Twenty-nine of those called the regicides, were tried and condemned at once; Waller, Harrison, Carew, Cooke, Hugh Peters, Scott, Clement, Scroop, Jones, Hacker, Axtell, Heveningham, Marten, Millington, Tichburn, Roe, Kilburn, Harvey, Pennington, Smith, Downs, Potter, Garland, Fleetwood, Meyn, J. Temple, P. Temple, Hewlet, and Waite. Many of these were put to death with unexampled horrors. In a very few months, this parliament, which, in fact, was no legal parliament at all, having never had a regular election, had converted the whole country into a shambles. In Scotland, equal fury had been shown, and the Duke of Argyle, on evidence extracted from private letters by the traitor Monk, was executed. At home, the country narrowly escaped the eternal infamy of hanging its immortal poet, Milton, for having written his "Defence of the English People," and his "Eikonoclastes." Only three voices were raised in his favour—one of them that of his glorious friend, and friend of his country, Andrew Marvel. He was threatened with the gallows, committed to the custody of the serjeant-at-arms, his property plundered under the name of *fees*, his two famous works above-named, burned by the hangman, and himself declared for ever incapable of public service. Fortunately, he had already rendered such service to his country, as neither kings nor aristocrats could permanently neutralise. It is said, on what authority I know not, that Charles, when Milton was old and blind, had the brutality to pay him a visit, in order to insult him; when he told him that his blindness was a judgment on him for his proceedings against the king; to which he replied,—"If that be a judgment on me, what was the judgment on

your father? I have only lost my eyes, but your father lost his head."

But the thirst of vengeance of this base prince and his aristocracy could not be appeased by shedding of blood; they acted the political hyenas; tore open the graves of the dead, even of innocent women; hung already decayed mortal remains on the gallows, and cut off the heads of the unconscious dead, betraying a quenchlessness of vengeance, which could only have been excited by the flames of the infernal regions. The bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw were torn from their tombs, dragged on hurdles to Tyburn, hanged, beheaded, and burned under the gallows, the heads being set on the top of Westminster Hall. All those who had been buried in Westminster Abbey since the commencement of the Civil Wars, were torn out of their graves by the zealous clergy, under the royal warrant, and flung into a pit dug in St. Margaret's churchyard. Amongst these were the remains of Cromwell's mother and daughter, who had committed no political offences, but had been models of female domestic virtue; and—the names which follow, in the words of a modern historian, should be for ever remembered in the annals of kings and aristocrats—those "of May, the accomplished translator of Lucan's *"Pharsalia,"* and historian of the Long Parliament; of Pym, the great and learned champion of English liberty; and of *Blake, the renowned and honest-hearted, the first of naval heroes*, were torn from the sacred asylum of the tomb, and cast like dogs into that vile pit."*

These would have been deeds never to be forgiven by the English people; but these made but a small portion of the infamy of this disgraceful period. The king was running a high career, and it was deemed prudent to have a formally though not constitutionally elected parliament, as a better authority for his daring proceedings and plans against the national liberties. The aristocratic and tory influence were in full swing. The

* Knight's History. See also Pepy's and Evelyn's Memoirs; Clarendon; Oldmixon.

† When the Dean of Westminster in our day refused admittance into that sacred mausoleum of many a vile pimp and harlot, to the remains, and then to the statue of Lord Byron, with what a beautiful clerical consistency and right reverend civility he might have said—"How much better do I treat this anomalous creature, this radical lord, and unorthodox poet, than my clerkly predecessors did May, the historian, and the gallant Admiral Blake! They cast their remains, like dogs, out of our sanctuary; I only prevent him, like other dogs, from coming in."

great families, the old gentry, the cavaliers, the clergy, were all united to strain every old corrupt practice, to pack a parliament of their own fashion. All who opposed them were frightened into silence; for all who dared to say a word about a constitution were denounced as enemies of monarchy; and thus the better portion of the nation were fairly run down by the blood-hound rabble of the desperate harpies of national plunder; and that parliament which out-sat that very so-named Long Parliament—the Pension Parliament—was brought together. One of its first acts was legally to murder Sir Henry Vane, Colonels Okey, Corbet, and Barkstead. Assassins were sent to the continent to hunt out such of the Commonwealth's men as had escaped thither from the butcher's shop of the English court; and Mr. Lisle was shot dead on a Sunday at Lausanne, as he was in the act of entering the church, by two villains, who cried "God save the king!" and galloped off.

But to pursue the gory course of personal vengeance would make a long story; and this would be, after all, but a small portion of that suffering through which this country had to pass for the restored cause of king and nobles. All that had been fought for, and died for, through so many arduous and anxious years, in the hands of this debauched court, this ready parliament, these lawless judges, went at once to the ground. Almost the very first act of Charles's first parliament, on his arrival, was to vote him the tonnage and poundage *for life*; the very thing which, more than all others, had brought his father and his parliament to drawn swords; and as his father had, by all sorts of unconstitutional means, extorted on an average 900,000*l.* a year from his subjects, it voted this virtuous son an income of 1,200,000*l.* His second parliament, the next year, condemned the "Solemn League and Covenant" to be burnt by the common hangman; all the acts and ordinances of the Long Parliament to be treated in like manner; gave up to the king full and exclusive power over the militia and all forces by land and sea; declared that there was no legislative authority in either house of parliament without the king; that neither house could pretend, in any case whatever, to take up war against the king. They voted the bishops to their seats in the Lords; increased the rigour of the law of treason; declared it a high misdemeanour to call the king a papist, *i.e.* to speak the truth, for he was notoriously one; and knocked on the head the last chance of popular liberty, by abolishing the right of sending petitions to parliament with more than twenty names attached, except by permission of three justices of peace, or the majority of the grand jury. Thus absolutism and all its horrors were at once restored; and there

is no wonder, when we go on, and behold the awful destruction of the liberty of the subject in this reign. The clergy, with all that venomous acrimony which distinguishes priestly malignity, urged on vengeance for their own humility and expulsion. A Conformity Bill, of the most rigorous nature, was passed. In a new Collect, added to the Prayer Book, the debauched Charles was styled "*our most religious king!*" and his father was sainted, the 30th of January being dedicated to "King Charles the Martyr!"

Amongst the famous acts of this reign which even yet we have not got altogether free from, were the abolition of the Act of the Long Parliament, compelling a call of parliament at least once in three years; the Conventicle Act, which filled the prisons with the conscientious, and the pockets of corrupt magistrates and constables with bribes and fees, as well as driving many enthusiasts to the gallows, where they were strung up, a dozen at a time. There was that famous instrument of party, the Test Act; the Catholic Exclusion Bill; and lastly, the attempt, by the means of that judge "damned to eternal fame," the bloody Jefferies, to destroy the corporation charters and municipal institutions by the act of *quo warranto*, as the well-known schools of constitutional liberty, and nurseries of young statesmen and patriots.

We know what it has cost us in our own day to fight out and annihilate the power of these tyrannic acts of this disgraceful reign. Our triennial parliament we have not even yet regained. But it was not merely the parliamentary bulwarks of the nation, the works of the greatest and noblest of our ancestors, founded and built up, and cemented with their very blood, that this restored king and restored aristocracy laid low; they slew the only men who dared to protest against these aggressions; and the reign of Charles II., independent of its other mass of infamy, stands marked to all posterity by the bloody scaffolds of Lord Russell and Algernon Sidney.

In Scotland the war against liberty and conscience was carried on with equal ferocity. The attempts of Charles I., which brought down upon him Leslie and the Covenanters, were nothing to the wholesale despotism, carnage, and tortures of this reign. The demons of toryism, high-churchism, and aristocracy, were let loose on the country. At first the effect was similar to that in England. "It is an astounding fact that, in a country which, a quarter of a century before, had risen like one man against much less than this, not a sword leaped from its scabbard; not a blow was struck for the League and Covenant; but the people were stupefied by these proceedings, and they were abandoned

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and betrayed by the majority of the selfish and time-serving aristocracy.*

But when the spirit of the people began to rise, soldiers were poured in upon them. The people were plundered in their houses, and shot at work in their fields; the Court of High Commission was re-established; the prisons were crowded with victims; till the peasantry rose and endeavoured to defend or avenge themselves. The names of Lauderdale and Archbishop Sharpe are made immortal for their infliction of infernal tortures; their thumb-screws, their iron-boots, their racks and gibbets, are rivetted fast and firm to their names. Sharpe fell by the hands of the incensed people; but how many thousands of the people again fell under the murderous musketry and cannon of Turner, Dalzel, Monmouth, Claverhouse, and James the bigot, afterwards James II., who for a long time was in Scotland carrying on all these tortures and butcheries! To such a degree were these persecutions carried, under the influence of this heartless wretch, that even women and children were punished because they would not give information against their husbands and parents. All who were suspected of giving succour or shelter in the hour of extremity,—even parents to their children, or children to their parents,—were ruthlessly treated. About two thousand individuals were outlawed at one time, and thousands more began to think of emigrating to America.

And how was "our most religious king" employed while his subjects were thus in all quarters harassed, tortured, shot, or beheaded? He was leading the most lewd and infamous life recorded in history. His court swarmed with mistresses, bastards, pimps, procurers, and parasites of every description. He compelled his wife, Catherine of Braganza, to associate with his professed mistresses. He had one Chiffinch, the great procurer, and master of his harem; and while his subjects were groaning and bleeding under the hands of his aristocrats, he was always to be found in the midst of his women, and a set of profligate courtiers of similar tastes to his own. The number of his mistresses was prodigious; but the chief were Mrs. Palmer, formerly a Miss Villiers, with whom he lived in double adultery towards his own wife, and towards her husband, whom he made Viscount Castlemaine, and her finally Duchess of Cleveland; a Mademoiselle Kerouaille, a French woman, whom he made Duchess of Portsmouth; Nell Gwynn, an actress; Mary Davis, and Lucy Walters. The picture of the manners of the court left by the

* Knight's History; Burnet; State Trials; Miscellanea Aulica; Laing's History of Scotland.

diary writers of the time, are inconceivable in their utter abandonment of morality and sense of decorum. It was one scene, not only of adulterous, but of incestuous crimes in the highest quarters. The people were so enraged that, having pulled down several brothels in the city, they stuck up placards, saying they would next go and pull down the great one at Whitehall.

Pepys, in one entry of his diary, says, "The two royal brothers, the king and Duke of York, are both making love to the same court woman—the infamous Mrs. Palmer. The duke hath got my Lord Chancellor's daughter with child; high gambling is common at court, and the people are beginning to open their eyes in astonishment." In another place he says, "At court things are in a very ill condition, there being so much emulation, poverty, and the vices of drinking, swearing, and love amours, that I know not what will be the end of it but confusion. The clergy so high that all people that I meet with do protest against their practice."

The kept mistresses of the king, as he was not true to his wife, nor to any of them, were also, in general, equally free in their practices. Their houses swarmed with children, and all these the king was made the reputed father of, and they must be provided for, and married into noble families, and have estates conferred on them. For all this folly, vice, and debauchery, all the money which parliament could grant, or his emissaries and venal judges could wring from the people, was just like so much cash flung into the bottomless pit. Of this bastard brood there are many traces yet in different families of the aristocracy; but the country was especially saddled with three of them as Dukes of St. Albans, Grafton, and Richmond, whose descendants under these names stand aloft in the peerage to this day. Luckily, the Duke of Monmouth, another of them by Lucy Walters, was cut off.

But the mischief did not stop here. To meet the boundless demands of his profligacy, his harem, and all his pimps and panders, with *their* troops of hangers-on, the whole resources of England were not enough; and he sold himself to the French king,—to that king who, for more than half a century, was the common disturber of all Europe, and the haughty enemy of all liberty and religion. Like his father, he determined to be absolute; but he had learned that it did not do to threaten, and therefore he resolved to have a standing army, and when that was strong enough, to dismiss all parliaments, and rule like a regular grand Turk, as in other respects he was. Luckily, the eternal demands for his pleasures saved the country from the

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schemes of his power ; but the story of his infamy as a pensioned slave of France, and that for the destruction of his country's liberties, not only broke forth in his own day, but has since come more broadly to the light through the discoveries made by Sir John Dalrymple amongst the despatches in the *Dépôt des Affaires étrangères* at Versailles.*

Louis XIV., in his ambitious designs on the continent, found it very convenient to pension the king of England for his non-interference ; and this base king, whom a credulous people had received again to the throne, found it equally convenient, to avoid being compelled to have recourse to parliament, to take his money. Both he and his brother James having long resolved to make the crown of England absolute, by the aid of Louis and French money, proposed to fortify Plymouth, Hull, and Portsmouth. James was lord admiral ; the guards were increased ; and with the aid of Louis and 6000 French infantry, they calculated on putting down all opposition. Charles was to have a pension of 200,000*l.*, and was to proclaim popery as the established religion.†

The French king sent over Charles's sister, the Duchess of Orleans, and Mademoiselle Kerouaille, the latter of whom, as a useful spy here, staid as chief sultana of Charles's harem. Though the immediate objects of this treaty failed, Charles still continued a pensioner, and soon after we hear of his receipt of 500,000 crowns from Louis, to enable him to put off the session of parliament, whose demands might seriously interfere with Louis's proceedings against Holland. In 1676 we find him signing a secret treaty with his own hand for his pension ; and in 1677, putting off the sitting of parliament for a whole year, to favour Louis's campaign against the Prince of Orange, his own nephew, and own ally. The next year he pretended to go to war with France, and got 400,000*l.* voted by parliament for the army and navy, meaning nothing more than to get the cash for his necessities ; being all the while in the secret pay of Louis ; and while the public were expecting that he would send off his troops to assist his nephew, he was laughing with Barillon, the French ambassador, in the apartments of his French mistress, the Duchess of Portland, at the credulity of his good English subjects. For this hocus-pocus he demanded more money of Louis. But in December of this year, enmity amongst Charles's ministers brought out some of these recent proceedings before parliament. Danby, the prime minister, sought to impeach

* Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland, by Sir John Dalrymple.

† Lingard, from the original treaty in possession of Lord Clifford.

Montague, who had been ambassador in France, of treasonable conferences with the Pope's nuncio. Montague, to save himself, accused Danby of soliciting money from Louis in the king's name. The Commons ordered these papers before them, and were astounded to find one of these applications of the minister attested by a postscript by Charles himself—"This is written by my order." The House was thrown into a flame; and, to prevent fresh exposures, Charles at once dismissed this Pension Parliament, which had now sat for seventeen years. And well might it be called the Pension Parliament!

The corruption of the court had, as is generally the case, soon descended to all around it. Louis, having secured the king of England, had next proceeded to secure the influential members of parliament, ministers, and other active men. The scene of corruption and French pensioners in this dreadful reign, as laid bare by Dalrymple, from the French Archives, make one shudder. The king and his ministers were dearly purchased; Montague himself having received 50,000 crowns to win Danby; and his sister, Lady Hervey, others of his friends, Buckingham, the Duchess of Portsmouth, the Earl of Sunderland, &c., being all greedy claimants and receivers of this base French pay.

Charles told Barillon, the French ambassador, and agent in this infamous business, that this was the way for Louis "*de mettre pour toute sa vie l'Angleterre dans sa dependance.*" The king, the duke of York, Churchill, afterwards the celebrated duke of Marlborough, Hyde, earl of Clarendon, Danby, and others, besides the courtiers just mentioned, were all engaged in this nefarious traffic. Churchill was sent by James to Paris as his agent in it. Barillon repeatedly tells Louis that the Duchess of Portsmouth and Lord Sunderland expected gratifications for themselves; that Sunderland could not be secured without *a great deal of money*; and Louis ordered the payment of 10,000 pistoles to Sunderland, and 5000 to the Duchess of Portsmouth, with promise of more if they kept Charles in the interests of France. It is calculated that Charles himself could not have received less than a million of money from Louis.

Such was this "most religious king," his court and aristocracy; such the corruption of morals, manners, and principles which they diffused through England, and the despotism they rivetted on the nation; such the infamy they piled on its name. A libidinous and traitor-king; a debauched court and aristocracy; a slavish parliament; a persecuting church; our arms used at home to destroy and enslave our countrymen; our fleets disgraced on the ocean;—what a contrast to the sober dignity,

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victorious career, the awful fame of the Commonwealth! To descend lower in the scale of national infamy, it were impossible; a little more endurance, and this wretched dynasty shall be annihilated. But if ever Providence displayed its chastisements in the fury of his elements, it was in this reign, by the plagues and fire that desolated London.

The closing scenes of it were worthy of it and the king. He was carried off suddenly in the midst of his vice. The man who had suffered the kingdom to be torn to pieces with factitious popish plots and Titus Oates' denunciations of the Papists, and would never lift a finger to save the Catholics from their enemies, though he laughed in private at the sham plots,—in his last moments, with the bishops and clergy crowding round his bed, walks them all out, and—takes the last unction from a popish priest!

"I can never forget," says Evelyn, "the inexpressible luxury and profaneness, gaming, and all dissoluteness, and, as it were, total forgetfulness of God, it being Sunday evening, which this day se'nnight I was witness of; the king sitting and toying with his concubines, Portsmouth, Cleveland, Mazarin, &c.—a French boy singing love songs in that glorious gallery; whilst about twenty of the great courtiers and other dissolute persons were at basset round a large table, a bank of at least 2000*l.* in gold before them, upon which two gentlemen who were with me made reflections. Six days after was all in the dust!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE last and the worst of the Stuarts now mounted the throne. It was a race curst with a judicial blindness. It had had warnings from heaven, and from men. Dethronement, decapitation, expulsion from the country, long sufferings and indignities were all lost upon it. Charles II. had only come back to spread vice like a foul plague through moral England; to outrage its high sense of propriety by a public display of every low species of debauchery; to mock the vaunted beauty of England's domestic purity, and the purity of English women, by making harlots the companions of his wife, by clothing them in the highest titles of nobility, and by planting his illegitimate brood forever amongst the highest nobles, thus telling them at what rate he valued their proud dignities. After he had set the

bastards of player-women (after all the most respectable women he had to do with), and of French courtizans, in the rank of dukes, there could be no more serious pretence about pure blood, or great distinction in a ducal coronet. But this James was not only a more confirmed, but a more unattractive tyrant. He was a heartless, pitiless, and senseless bigot. Gloomy and cruel, he was prepared to rival in deeds of savage ruthlessness any Spanish Philip, any Alva, or any inquisitor of Spain's infernal catalogue. His father's falling head, or ten falling heads, would have had no warning voice for him. Moses and the Prophets might have risen from the dead—ay, the trump of doom have sounded in his ear—without altering his nature. They might have scared him, for, like all tyrants, he was a miserable coward, but they could never have cured him. The only thing resembling a virtue in him arose out of the vice of his nature—he was too pig-headed to play long, or well the hypocrite. Charles, if till his last moments he had any sense of religion at all, played the hypocrite well. He went along with the Established Church; suffered the Catholics to be persecuted and harassed; suffered parliament even to pass an act excluding any Papist from the throne. He never threatened, but sold himself to France for secret help, and watched for the hour when he might overturn our liberties. But James had seen all this, and took no warning. He was a notorious Papist; and was notoriously surrounded by them. He roused the jealousy of both church and nation to such a degree, during Charles's reign, that he was actually banished by popular opinion. The Commons passed a bill which excluded him, as a Papist, from the succession, which, however, was thrown out at the king's earnest prayer by the Lords; yet nothing but the king's twice hastily dissolving parliament could have prevented this measure. Still, these were no warnings. He came to the throne, and speedily set to work in such earnest to introduce popery, that all parties were glad to chase him away. He had no sense of courtesy and of popular conciliation. Even in his vices, he was the more disgusting from his utter want of taste. Charles did at least select beautiful women, but James's mistresses were notoriously plain. Charles used to say that his brother's mistresses were given him as a penance by his father confessor, they were so ugly;—and one of them, Miss Sedley, manufactured into a Countess of Dorchester, is, according to Horace Walpole, made to say herself, that she wondered what James chose his mistresses for. "We are none of us handsome," said she, "and if we had wit, he has not enough to find it out."

But his master qualities were his cruelty and bigotry. He

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delighted, as we shall see, in blood and the infliction of torture; he never forgave an enemy, and he never paused in his determination to restore popery as the state religion, and to make himself absolute. During his residence in Scotland, in his brother's time, he gave the most incessant impulse to the cruelties then practised on the Covenanters; to the crushing of thumbs, wedging of legs into the iron boot, to gibbeting and shooting. Scarcely had he mounted the throne when the rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth enabled him to glut his heart with blood. He had, long before Charles's death, been patronising and preparing a fit instrument for the execution of his sanguinary rage; and now, having cut off Monmouth's head, he sent out Jefferies on what he jestingly called his campaign, *i.e.*, on his circuit in the west of England, where the insurrection had principally prevailed, not to decree justice, but to spread wholesale vengeance. This scene of horror has become marked on the page of our history in characters of undying indignation, and the name of Jefferies thence assumed an everlasting pre-eminence amongst those of the infamous men who have degraded themselves from the rank of judges to become the hangmen of tyrants. The king's commanders, Lord Feversham, a Frenchman, Kirk, and Trelawny, had already scoured the country, committed the greatest havoc and most lawless cruelties: when they had done, and James had assured them of his full satisfaction in their proceedings, then Jefferies began.

He had been created Baron of Wem, but the people more appropriately called him the Earl of Flint. He proceeded on his circuit, attended by a troop of horse, and it was said that he had been made a lieutenant-general. James had even the folly and brutality to write to his son-in-law, the Prince of Orange, without for a moment foreseeing that these very facts would bring William to England, that Jefferies was gone on his campaign; that he had already hanged several hundreds, and would hang more, and send others to the plantations.

The first victim was Mrs. Alicia Lisle, widow of the patriot Lisle, who had been shot by Charles's assassins at Lausanne. She was charged at Winchester with having given a night's lodging to two fugitives from the battle of Sedgmore. She was aged, and so lethargic from her age, that she frequently slumbered at the bar, where she stood in peril of her life. She was so deaf that she could not hear what she was accused of. It was proved that she did not know that the fugitives were from the battle, but only knew one of them as a presbyterian minister. It was proved, too, by the clergy, and ladies of high rank, that she had all her life been herself extremely loyal;

had rendered essential services to the king's friends in the civil wars; that her own son had in this very rebellion fought for James *against* Monmouth; and that after her husband's murder, her estate had been granted her for her excellent conduct during the prevalence of her husband's party. All this was earnestly laid before James, with prayers for her pardon. He declared that he would not even respite her for a day! Well, indeed, did every act of this ruthless monster justify the keen answer which Colonel Ayliffe, one of his victims, gave him—"You know, sir," said James, "it is in my power, if I please, to pardon you." "It is in your power," replied the heroic man, "but it is not in your nature."

It would be a revolting task to follow bloody Jefferies on what the people called his Bloody Assize. He stormed and blackguarded on the bench, more like a Billingsgate fishwoman than a judge, and hanged men up at once if they refused to plead guilty. This frightened them into compliance, and all he had to do was to consign them in whole heaps to the hangman. On his first day at Dorchester, he wrote to Sunderland, the minister, in triumphant glee:—"I this day began with the rebels, and have dispatched twenty-eight." James was so delighted with this, that he instantly made him Lord Chancellor. It is not known what was the sum total of his executions, but in Exeter the list of prisoners was two hundred and forty-three; in Taunton, eleven hundred, of whom two hundred and ninety-three were quickly dispatched; but as no judgments were entered, the whole tale of deaths must ever remain a mystery. The amount was certainly enormous; for the executions took place in thirty-six towns and villages. The dripping heads were fixed on the churches, the town halls, along the streets, and the highways, in such numbers that the roads could not be travelled for the horror and the stench. Shirly, author of "The Bloody Assize," writes, "Nothing could be liker hell than these pests—cauldrons hissing, carcases boiling, pitch and tar sparkling and glowing, bloody limbs boiling, and tearing and mangling." "England," says Oldmixon, "was an Aeldama. The country, for sixty miles together, from Bristol to Exeter, had a new and terrible sort of sign-posts and signs—gibbets, and heads, and quarters of its slaughtered inhabitants. Every soul was sunk in anguish and terror, sighing by night and by day for deliverance, but shut out of all hope by despair."

Numbers were shipped off to slavery in the West Indies,—only a more lingering, but not less certain death; and those only who could pay largely for their ransom escaped, as Priedeaux, imprisoned on mere suspicion, for 1500*l.*; Hampden for

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60000*l.*; and James, so far from being ignorant of all these atrocities, as some tory writers would persuade us, used, according to Bishop Burnet, to jest with foreign ministers, and make himself very merry over these exploits of Jefferies.

But by this infernal cruelty, so *un-English*, so abhorrent to the whole English character, he had lost himself for ever with the entire body of the people. They admired Monmouth for his mildness and popular qualities. James was a demon, and, like his brother, a pensioner of France for the whole subjection of his own people. He was daily increasing and disciplining his army with this money, and for this object; but luckily his bigotry brought the church and the aristocracy upon him too. He determined with a high and rapid hand to restore popery. He filled the army and all offices with Papists. He sent Palmer, the Earl of Castlemaine, thus created for his wife's prostitution to the late king, as ambassador to Rome; he received the pope's ambassador openly in London. Popish bishops and priests were already in swarms thrust into the most lucrative livings in the church; the parliaments of both Scotland and England were hastily dismissed because they would not submit to this state of things; and James was come to the point of ruling without a parliament and without the army. But he might have known that neither the church nor the aristocracy, much less the people, would tolerate this. The people dreaded the Papists for their past terror, and the king's bloody campaign under Jefferies gave them an awful warning of what would be their fate under a thoroughly papistical power. Lords and priests and bishops were not likely to give up quietly their good things and offices to the greedy swarm of Papists. Had James had but the slightest knowledge of human nature he would have known that they would act as Satan suggested to the Almighty, in the Book of Job—"Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." c. i. 10, 11.

This was the fact. He commanded the clergy to publish in the churches his "Declaration of Indulgence," which would have let in at once all the broods and harpies of popery. They refused. He imprisoned some of the bishops for their obstinacy, and the judges acquitted them. The match was set to the train of excitement which was laid all over the kingdom,—through every town, and into every Protestant house, and—*THE REVOLUTION WAS COME.*

Great praise and glory have been heaped on the seven bishops for their conduct on this occasion. It has been represented by the tory writers as if *they* indeed created and effected this mighty revolution. The revolution was the work of the Stuarts; it was their long and hopeless career of treason and tyranny against the nation, which was roused up to the intolerable pitch by the insane bigotry of James. It was not the effect of the bishops, or of any respect to them; it was the consequence of universal oppression, and the heart of the whole nation was in it. The act of the bishops and church was but *the craft of the class*, the natural instinct of self-preservation; an instinct in which aristocracy and its children of all orders have never shown themselves to be wanting. And, indeed, nothing in history is finer than the moral retribution, the poetical justice of the state church being thus driven with this cleft stick, and compelled in the very person of the bishops, and for its very existence, to resist, and to assist in casting out that line which they had so long and so diligently laboured to fix on the nation, to the utter destruction of its liberties, and in which work of destruction they had co-operated with it with right good-will, so long as it suffered them to retain their own booty, their own livings and honours.

Let the reader now look back through the long retrospect of these last four reigns. To the hour, and from the hour when James the pedant first entered England, let him glance down to this eventful period, and what will he see? The high church, and the aristocracy, its national ally, worshipping absolutism in the person of the monarch; echoing and supporting with all their flattery, might, and influence, the doctrines of divine right, passive obedience, and non-resistance. There they will see Bancroft, Whitgift, and others, their brother bishops, telling the modern Solomon, when he rated and spurned for them the Puritan divines at Hampton Court, that "his Majesty was the breath of their nostrils, and that by the Divine inspiration." There my readers will see Dr. Cowell, under the patronage of Bishop Bancroft, publishing in his Law Dictionary that the king was above all law; will see Mainwaring, Montague, and Sibthorp, advanced by Charles I. to bishoprics and stalls for preaching that, if a prince should command a thing contrary to the laws of God and nature, they must still obey him, as the Lord's anointed; offering no resistance, no railing, but passive obedience. There they will find Bishop Williams telling Charles "that there was a public conscience and a private conscience." There they will find that in all the arbitrary measures of these kings for forcing the consciences of their subjects

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in Scotland and Ireland, as well as in England, the bishops were the unfailing abettors. They will find the bishops and clergy supporting Charles in all his illegal and tyrannical outrages on his subjects in the Star Chamber and High Commission Court, and Laud, their admired primate, the most fiery and officious actor in promotion of these atrocities. The clippings, and loppings, and brandings, and nose-slittings of Prynne and Bastwick, and Leighton, will testify against them. They will see Oxford and Cambridge singing the praises of absolutism and non-resistance; and Oxford receiving Charles with open arms when he commenced war on his subjects. They will find the high churchmen eagerly claiming rewards from Charles II. for having helped to bring him back. When he was come back, and fairly installed amongst his mistresses, they will see the Convocation hailing him in the Liturgy as "our most religious king." They will find them instigating him against all Dissenters to the passing of these Acts—the Five-Mile Act, the great Act of Uniformity, which they regarded as their very bulwark; and being within a hair'sbreadth of obtaining an OATH of NON-RESISTANCE, to be imposed on everybody! This they will find so late as 1665, while the parliament sat at Oxford, and the bishops and parsons there preaching before the king and parliamentary members, as if this *Non-resistance Bill* was already passed; and the people of England, to use the words of a modern writer, "were now slaves both by act of parliament and the word of God. Their pastoral charges and sermons rolled in thunder louder than that of Laud and Mainwaring, upon the divine right of kings, the duty of passive obedience in subjects, and the eternal damnation provided for those who should resist the Lord's anointed, or the ministers of the only true church upon earth."* They will find the Convocation, and the clergy, echoing this in the most vehement style; descanting on the divine right of kings, declaring "that it belongs not to subjects to create or to censure, but to honour and obey their king, whose *fundamental law of succession no religion, no law, no fault, no forfeiture, could alter or diminish.*"† They will find, that on the memorable 21st of July, 1683, the day on which Lord Russell perished on the scaffold, the university of Oxford again, by a "Judgment and Decree" publishing and pronouncing this doctrine. Nay, they will find both universities, on the accession of this very James, spite of his notorious popery, hastening to "declare their faith and true obedience to him, without any restrictions or limitations of his power."

* Knight's Hist.; Ralph; Burnet.

† Address from Cambridge.

Thus the church had, on all occasions, freely and fully surrendered to these arbitrary monarchs, as far as in them lay, the rights and liberties of all England. They had done all that they could for their own selfish aggrandisement, to overturn the constitution of their country; to lay it in eternal thralldom, and that in the sacred name of God, at the feet of Church and King, and it was beautiful that it should come to this at last. It was beautiful that the universities, which had always been the great hotbeds and nurseries of toryism, and had been the most truculently officious in fuming these kings with the adulation of the non-resistance doctrine, which *no religion, no law, no fault or forfeiture* in the monarch himself *could alter or diminish*, should be the first to be tested by their divine-right king. This was done in 1687, when he demanded that they should admit seven popish fellows of Exeter College in Oxford, and confer the degree of M.A. on one Alban Francis, a Benedictine friar at Cambridge. Then the worthies who had for four reigns been preaching and teaching non-resistance as the law of Heaven to others, on being touched themselves, "cursed the king to his face!" He tried the equally adulatory and gospel-twisting bishops, and they did the same!

All that the church had taught, the aristocracy had supported; nay, when the Commons made a violent effort to prevent this James coming to the throne, the Lords threw out the Bill of Exclusion. But now his folly was grown too egregious; his atrocities had become too monstrous. There was nothing for it but to fling him forth, and with him thus terminate at once the line of the Stuarts, and the mischievous trash of divine right; to throw off the hypocritical mask of non-resistance, and end the second great period in the history of the English aristocracy.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE THIRD, OR MOLE-PERIOD OF THE ARISTOCRACY.

"They shun the light because their deeds are evil."

DECLARATION OF OUR SAVIOUR.

WE are now arrived at the third and last period of this remarkable history. In the fifth chapter I observed that the history of the aristocracy divided itself into three epochs. During the first, which commenced with the Conquest, and,

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ended with the Wars of the Roses, the aristocrats made their way by fighting for the crown, clinging to the crown, and moreover, not the less zealously plundering the crown, on all possible occasions. Their object was to feather their nest well; and, as the narrative shows, they succeeded to such an extent, that they alarmed the jealousy of the crown, nay, made it totter on the monarch's head; and they at length grew audacious enough to pluck it from one head, and set it on another, according to their pleasure.

The ascension of the Tudors to the throne, saw, therefore, these monarchs set earnestly about to abate this arrogance and overgrown affluence of their feudal vassals; and thus commenced the second epoch, which ended with the expulsion of the Stuarts. The Tudors humbled them to the dust, and yet, though a new power during this period arose—that of the people—the aristocracy never attempted to ally itself with this new power against the crown, in order to regain its lost wealth and influence. No; it was too clear-sighted. It had an instinctive perception that this new power was a hostile power; that it was too newly awakened to consciousness of its rights, and therefore too watchful to be flattered or deluded out of them. The crown, though it had so sharply punished its pride; and reduced its pride-inspiring wealth, was still the only power on which it could lean. It, therefore, allowed itself to be drawn by the crown into its daring attacks on the people and constitution, under the Stuarts, and fell with it.

Then came that third and last period of which we are now to treat. Both crown and aristocracy had received such a lesson from the great patriots of the Commonwealth; from the sword of Cromwell, from the tongues of Pym and Hampden, and from the stern integrity of such men as Marvel and Selden, as was never likely to be forgotten either by them or the world. They had been rent down from their high places and swelling lordliness. All their boasts of divine right, and hereditary right, had been swept away like the cobwebs of the schools. They had been cut down like great trees that had travelled in leafy grandeur and colossal stature towards the skies through long ages—cut down by the democratic axe in one hour. They rubbed their eyes and found that their inborn, inherent, invincible might was but a dream, a smoke, a wreath of mist, that lay only over the earth, because the sun of truth and knowledge had so long delayed its rising. All their aphorisms and sage saws, and grave and round-mouthed declarations of kingly and aristocratic godhead had been struck down at a single announcement by common sense, that the people were alive and awake,

and would take vengeance for many and long injuries. This development of so stupendous a power on earth, struck terror into crown and coronet. But time went over. The first outburst of popular power, like steam which had been pressed, not under human engines, but under the mountains of earth, rent its passage through all opposing denseness, made our globe quake, and shot up into the air. It then again became gradually calm. The giant intellects and great hearts of the new reign of things passed, one after another, into the infinite, their true world and abiding place, and CUNNING soon showed to crown and coronet, that through him they might still rule; that the people were still infants in wisdom; that the Samson who had alarmed and chastened them, might be robbed of the locks of his power by flatterers; that STRENGTH, who, for a moment, had been against them, might be again lured to their side. The people was found, like Samson, strong, but like Samson, not overdone with sagacity. It was discerned to be gullible: to be

Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw.

The aristocracy having, therefore, made this consolatory discovery, commenced its last, its greatest, its most astoundingly successful course—that of cajoling and undermining. To beard John Bull was, it perceived, to get a fall; but how readily might he be stroked to quiescence, and soothed to sleep! To ally itself to the popular power, and thereby to give to STRENGTH his full dominion, dominion in the right, and for universal good, was totally opposed to its own nature. Aristocracy is essentially a beast of prey. It can fawn like a tiger, but it fawns only to spring and devour. It cannot exist but by a false and preponderating share of the public wealth; by false and fictitious honours. It, therefore, once more allied itself to the crown, but with a whisper from CUNNING, that even that too might be secured and put in subjection to it.

With the revolution of 1688 commenced, then, the reign of aristocratic *humbug*. It was declared broadly, and with a visage as honest as that of honesty itself, that the root of all national power is the people: that crown and aristocracy are of its election, and for its use: they are its state menials, its mere livery servants. All their insignia were protested to be only the badges and baubles of the state service. The people, in fact, chose the crown, and the crown those that should serve the people; but the people was sovereign, and the root of right and power. The three estates of the constitution were all for the good of the people; the constitution was proclaimed to be free

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and glorious; the people to be a free people. The people could dismiss monarch or aristocracy; had once done it, and could do it again—nobody denied it; but the monarch or aristocracy could not dismiss the people. The people, therefore, was a great, free, glorious people; and the House of Commons was given it as the theatre of its greatness, its freedom, and its glory, in which it could dictate to kings or peers the perpetual remembrance of its paramount title. Nay, on the plea that it would render the crown more dependent on its legitimate source of existence, the people, it was ordained by the aristocracy to give away its estate, its old family estate, its patrimonial support—to *themselves*! or to lease it out in everlasting leases—to *themselves*!

It was done; and John Bull, charmed with all this homage, swelling with all his greatness, and his freedom, and his glory, went away to his farm, and thence to his factory, and thence to his ships, and saw that all was going on prosperously everywhere; but forgot just one most essential thing—to take the house-door key in his pocket.

This key, the aristocracy adroitly possessed itself of. The key of John's house, the House of Commons, when not in his own pouch, was intrusted to a set of sturdy janitors named Counties and Boroughs. But the Counties were, in reality, the sworn slaves of the aristocracy, and the Boroughs were grown old, decrepit, and superannuated. Like most old men, they had become dreadfully avaricious; and, bribed by the aristocracy, they feigned deafness, and John, on his return, found himself shut out of doors. So great was his astonishment, that he was supposed to have lost his senses; for ever since, though wandering about without a roof to protect him, he is always filled with the idea that the servants of the aristocracy who crowd his house, are his own servants, and are preparing his dinner. To this hour, therefore, the aristocracy rule in his abode, collect his rents, rob and fleece his tenants remorselessly, and have brought him to the brink of ruin. His debts are the wonder of the world; his lunacy is its grand subject of compassion; and his true friends ask themselves with sighs, whether the day will ever come when, in the shape of another Cromwell, he will once more seize the house-door key, turn out the riotous knaves that waste his substance, and command them to "give place to better men!"

This, quitting our metaphor, and employing the language of serious and melancholy truth, is the state of things of which we have to take a more particular view. From and after the revolution of 1688, we see nothing more of a whole people in arms

against the sovereign ; we hear no more of divine right and absolutism ; the cannon of the Commonwealth mowed down these old and profitable humbugs, with their assertors, never to rise again. The only contentions from this period became for places ; the eternal war of aristocrats for the ministerial power. Aristocracy, dividing itself into two belligerent parties, under the names of Whigs and Tories, assumed the real government of the country, and kept up, and still keeps up to this hour, a fierce struggle for the reins of power and the good things of office. The warfare is maintained in the name, and for the people, and professedly for its benefit ; but the only people who receive any benefit are themselves. As we have shown, under Charles II. the aristocracy continued to free themselves from all their constitutional burdens, and to fling the sole taxation of the country on the people. Their next step, under William III., was to cajole the crown out of its private estate, and fling it too as a pauper on the people. Thus the aristocracy became the great possessors of the land, or, in other words, of the whole country, while the whole entire expenses were laid on the people. They had got the purse-strings into their hands by usurping the House of Commons, and thus both king and people were in their power. This was the triumph and *chef d'œuvre* of CUNNING. Both of these parties had a show of freedom, and a share of the constitution. The king could choose his own ministers, but where, and whence ? Out of the aristocracy. If the tories did not suit him, he could turn them out, and choose the whigs ; if the whigs displeased him, he could dismiss them, and call in the tories. But who were these whigs and tories ? The aristocracy ! Thus was the crown caught in a political net out of which there was no escape ; it was rivetted to an everlasting see-saw between whig and tory, but always the same aristocracy. It was amused with a sort of political Darby and Joan. Push back Darby, and out started Joan into the royal presence ; reject Joan, and out again came Darby !

It was the same thing with the people. The people were declared by the Bill of Rights to be the possessors of the House of Commons ; of one-third of the constitution. They were to choose their own representatives ; they were to grant or refuse money ; nothing could apparently be done without them. Such was the theory,—but what was the fact ? When they came to put their machinery into operation, they found it had exactly the same result ;—*their* house was filled, not by themselves, but with the aristocracy. They had both Darby and Joan, both whigs and tories there, fighting and haranguing most zealously ; but about what ? About, as this history will show, who should

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be in the ministry, or out of it; who should be handlers, receivers, enjoyers, and dispensers of the nation's fiscal wealth; who should be in full office pay, and who be contented with good, round, retiring pensions; for, with a wisdom worthy of the children of this world, knowing that out of two contending parties, one must ever and anon experience a fall as well as a rise, they soon laid the political featherbed of retiring pensions and allowances, to break these inevitable falls.

It was found, then, that though the nominal franchise lay in the people, the real one had become vested in counties, and old, decaying, or decayed boroughs, the property of the aristocracy. This once seen, those great European wars began which have nearly ever since divided the civilised world. It was on the plea of these wars that the aristocracy could best swell the grand stream of taxation which was now all to be drawn out of the pockets of the people, and turn it into their own, and into those of all their children, friends, and connections. They had long had their great ecclesiastical milch cow, and they were now to have their still more plenteous political milch cow. From this point of time began our great national debt to grow—the great cheese or product of their state milkings, and which has proved so indigestible, that neither they nor the people have ever been able to make more impression upon it with tooth, nail, axe, or mallet, than upon as much granite: like the Suffolk cheese which Bloomfield talks of, in the hog-trough, it soon became

Too big to swallow, and too hard to bite.

While the aristocracy fought the battles themselves, or paid for the campaigns, foreign wars, at least, were fewer and shorter; and, let it be remarked, let the wars be what they might, there was no debt accumulated, because it was they who would have to pay it. Now, however, that the people had to pay for them, they became almost incessant, and were carried on in a most reckless manner, in order that they and theirs might dip their hands deep into the war-treasury hoards; and in little more than a century we have spent, as our statistical tables show, *three thousand millions of pounds sterling!*

The aristocracy may be said to have lived and fattened on the blood of the whole world. Wars of all kinds, and for all pretences; wars for the balance of power in Europe; wars of aggression and slaughter of the natives in America, India, and Africa, have been the source of maintenance to the vast broods of the aristocracy, who did not find the whole land rental of England enough for them. We have fought for anybody, and

everybody—for anything, or for nothing; for Germans, Spaniards, Portuguese, Dutch, Belgians; for any people that were too cowardly or effeminate to take care of themselves; for the maintenance of despotism and popery all over the continent; and for this John Bull not only has had to pay, but yet owes a debt of *eight hundred millions*.

The most amazing thing in nature is, that through all this long reign of deception and plunder, debt and degradation, the English people—a most active, matter-of-fact, and intelligent people—should have been deluded to the ruin of their finances, and to exclusion from the constitution, by the mere aristocratic bird-calls of glory! liberty! and a national condition, the envy and admiration of the world! But every sensible man who looks well into the actual state of facts, will see that *this constitution has long ceased to exist*; that *there is no such thing as the British constitution*, according to the popular idea of it; that the *people* have no *house*, and the monarch little or no political existence, but is the mere gilded puppet of Darby and Joan. We will go a little nearer, and trace some of the most striking means by which this grand delusion has to this hour been so successfully kept up, and by which the aristocracy have contrived in reality to possess themselves of *everything in this country*;—of the Church and the State; the House of Lords and House of Commons; the sovereignty in the cabinet, and the possession of all offices; the army and the navy; the colonies abroad, and the land at home; in a word, of everything in England but the debt which they have bestowed on the people, and left them to pay, and the trade which they despise, yet continue to extract the sweets of, through the medium of taxation, in office salaries and pensions.

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CHAPTER XVII.

WHIG AND TORY—THE LOCUST AND THE PALMERWORM.*

"I am an old man and have seen many changes, without a real change of principle; I wish to see that kind of change *which I never yet saw*,—a change in which public men of all descriptions shall act from no other motive than the good of the public, without any ruin to their own personal interest."—SIR WILLIAM PULTENEY, *Speech on the resignation of the Granville Ministry in 1801.*

"From and after the Revolution of 1688," we have observed in the last chapter, "we see nothing more of a whole people in arms against the sovereign, we hear no more of divine right and absolutism; the only contentions became those for places, the eternal war of aristocrats for ministerial power. The whole aristocracy, dividing itself into two belligerent parties under the names of Whigs and Tories, assumed then the real government of the country, and kept up, and still keep up to this hour, a fierce struggle for the reins of power and the good things of office."

It is now our particular business to trace this warfare of selfishness, this history of party. It is the most remarkable history in the world. There is no instance of any people in the whole course of time who, by their active, enterprising, industrious qualities, have raised themselves to such a pitch of greatness as the English people; who have subdued more and greater nations than did Greek or Roman; who have landed alike on both continents and islands in every region of the earth, driving back the savage natives, as in America and Australia; subduing hundreds of millions of more civilised tribes, as in India; wresting from their European rivals the Cape, the West Indies, the Mauritius; planting their victorious flag on the islands of every sunny and of every misty sea; who have rooted firm into the soil of these vast regions their laws, their language, their arts, their civilisation, and their religion. There are no people who have maintained so nobly and heroically the independence of

* "That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten; and that which the locust hath left hath the cankerworm eaten; and that which the cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten."—Joel, c. I. 4. Which being interpreted meaneth: "That which the tory hath left hath the whig eaten; and that which the whig hath left hath the parson eaten; and that which the parson hath left hath the lawyer eaten."

their spirits, and yet who have suffered a cunning and proud party of drones so completely to delude them with the idea that they were governing themselves while they were governed by a brood of vampires. It is the most wonderful spectacle, and proof of the old adage, that Cunning the dwarf, can lead the giant Great-heart captive at his will, professing only to be his guide and shield-bearer. The English people, by commerce, by manufactures, by discovery and settlement of colonies, by the most scientific and pre-eminent agriculture, by wonderful inventions in the practical arts, have raised a wealth such as no country before ever saw—a wealth that covers and overflows this island (there never was any such Croesus as John Bull!)—and yet, with a blind infatuation, have suffered the descendants of the Danes to riot and revel on their wealth at will; to lead them to wholesale slaughter, from age to age, against their best customers, the nations of Europe; to seize on, mortgage, and forestall all this mass of toilsomely acquired wealth; to leave them with a debt of eight hundred millions on their books, which now threatens to render abortive all their labours and enterprises, and to crush their great trade, and all their mighty manufactories, beneath its weight.

In tracing this history, we shall be astonished to see how recklessly, how shamelessly the two grand aristocratic or vampire parties are perpetually squabbling and striving for the selfish gains of place, and how little there is on its surface, even of the well-maintained pretence of patriotism. The history of England since the Revolution, may be said to consist of wars abroad, and party wars at home—the great objects of both contentions being simply the plunder of the deluded people.

William III. was one of the best monarchs which, for many ages, have sate on the British throne. He made no attempts against the Constitution; he maintained always a very noble disinterestedness and respect for the liberties, both political and religious, of the people; he made the first step towards religious liberty, which had been sternly and totally denied by the reforming Tudors; the “glorious Queen Bess,” as she has been called, herself utterly refusing that anybody should have an opinion but her own—lopping off hands and heads, and fining and imprisoning all daring dissentients. William gave us the “Act of Toleration.”

It is, to be sure, a curious subject of reflection, that this same people who had driven out a race of tyrants, and called in a monarch of their own choice—not only asserting, but showing practically that they were the sovereign of the sovereign—that this people should receive, as a grand donation from the man

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they had set up, a *Toleration of their own opinions*; that their religious faith should be *just tolerated* by him and his^o government; and, what is still more strange, that after the lapse of a century and a half—a period of the most magnificent advance of knowledge in the world, this Act of Toleration should still be the only guarantee for the liberty of conscience which this great people possess; that their faith to God, and their internal and sacred conscience, the living voice of the Divinity in them, should *just be tolerated* by government, and no more; that, in fact, and in other words, the Divine power, the freedom of the Almighty in his realm of the human mind, is in England, not admitted as a great and glorious right, far beyond the reach of the legislation of men, but is merely tolerated! We tolerate the walk of God amongst us, but remind him that he is a Dissenter from the State Religion.

Nevertheless, at the time, and under the circumstances of the religious twilight of the time, it was a great step; and what was more, William, no doubt, partly or principally out of his own self-esteem, completely broke down the old doctrine of the divine right of kings; or rather, he swept the last remains and rubbish of it out of the kingdom. The people had shattered and hurled down the doctrine by first cutting off one king's head, and then driving away another; but the aristocratic Tories strove hard to rear it up again, and knit up its fractures. They declared that they had called in William's wife as the *legitimate* successor. Then the Commons carried up to the House of Lords their resolution that James, by quitting the kingdom, had *abdicated*, and that the throne was *vacant*. The Lords tried to get rid of this idea of vacancy by proposing that James should be nominally left on the throne, and a regent be appointed during his life.* Driven from this point by the firmness of William and the Commons, they then proposed that Mary should be proclaimed as rightful sovereign, and William merely king consort; but the reply of William to this proposition is most memorable. "No man can esteem a woman more than I do the princess, but I am so minded that I cannot think of holding anything by apron-strings; nor can I think it reasonable to share any place in the government unless it be in my own person. If you think fit to settle it otherwise, I will not oppose you, but will go back to Holland, and meddle no more in your affairs." He added, that "whatever others might think of a crown, it was no such great thing in his eyes; that he could live very well, and be well pleased without it." This was

* Ralph; Hallam; Burnet.

decisive. The Commons, and the sense of the people, and no less the conjugal pride of William's sensible wife, compelled the Lords to give way, and William was declared fully and right-fully king by popular choice. Thus was the great principle of the sovereignty of the people established for ever. Had the House of Lords prevailed, we should still have been groaning under the baleful doctrine of the divine right of kings, and all its pernicious consequences.*

But though William, backed by Mary, the Commons, and the people of England, achieved this great national victory, the Commons openly avowing as its constitutional axiom—that "we the people have a divine right too;"† yet William was not only a stranger in this country, but he was placed in such critical circumstances, as enabled the aristocracy not only shamefully to plunder him, but also to usurp the power of domestic government. The old king and his family were in existence; they were supported by France, the old rival of England, under its ambitious Louis XIV., and as we know, never till their bloody overthrow at Culloden in 1745, ceased, from time to time, their attempts to recover by arms and by secret negotiation, the cause they had lost. But in William's time they had not only foreign supporters, but a formidable party at home. The aristocracy abominated the principle and the precedent of a popular right to remove one king and elect another. The arbitrary principles of the Stuarts had a strong fellow-feeling in their own hearts; their violations of all constitutional restraints were favourable to their plunder of the people. They, and the large body of their adherents, the Jacobites, did not, therefore, merely resist, as far as they dared, the establishment of William, but they were more than suspected of a design of bringing in again James. This obliged William to endeavour to bind to him a strong body of adherents by lavish grants of honours, wealth, and offices; and on the other hand, the whigs, who had contributed to bring him in, could not be satisfied with anything less than the whole emoluments of government, and all the king could bestow as a reward for their services. "Men," says Evelyn in his Diary, "are minding only their present interests. To gratify as large a number as possible of the rapacious claimants for office, the Treasury, the Admiralty, the Great Seal, were all put into commission of many unexpected persons, to gratify the more. But this told two ways; for Admiral Herbert, who expected to be made lord high admiral, and Danby, who expected to be re-appointed lord treasurer, were extremely

* Burnet's Own Times.

† Ibid.

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disgusted. Lord Churchill, afterwards Marlborough, Mordaunt, Lovelace, Oxford, and others, had offers, but wanted something better, and were irritated at seeing William keep three of his Dutch followers, Bentinck, Auverquerque, and Zuylestein."

"The number," says Macfarlane, "of disinterested patriots was exceedingly small; every man of any consequence that had assisted in making the revolution, put in his claim for reward, and there was a general scramble for pensions, and places, and court distinctions. If England had been El Dorado, and William the most giving and liberal of princes, there would have been no satisfying all these claimants, and of the dissatisfied, too many were prone to extend their dissatisfaction to the whole revolution, with the principles it established; and were soon ready to undo what they had done. Under almost any other sovereign, the effect must have been seen in the worst of all revolutions—a restoration."

Many refused to swear allegiance to William; and amongst these were the Earls of Clarendon, Lichfield, and Exeter, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, seven of the bishops, and above four hundred of the clergy, including many of the highest dignity; whence came the party and the name of Nonjurors.*

William's reign was a most uneasy one. He was continually disturbed by plots and attempts on his life. He was almost always engaged on the continent in the war against Louis, and the tories kept up such a vehement warfare against his whig ministers at home, that they destroyed the peace of the queen, and are said to have shortened her days. At one time they succeeded so far as scarcely to leave a whig in office except Lord Somers, lord high chancellor, whom they caused to be impeached, with Lords Oxford, Portland, and others, attempting even to fix on him the charge of connection with the famous pirate, Captain Kid, to whom he had unwittingly given a commission to *free the seas of pirates*, when Kid turned out one of the greatest of them himself. Though William stuck firmly to his whig friends to the last, yet he was forced to admit many tories to his councils, who, and none more so than the greedy and perfidious Marlborough, were at once seeking office from him, and keeping up a treasonable correspondence with the court of his enemy, king James, at St. Germain. On the other hand, the whigs, who were generally in power, were accused, and it would appear justly, of robbing the public, and encouraging vast expense to raise large estates for themselves. Sale of offices and great peculation, which we shall notice in tracing

* Burnet; Hallam; Evelyn, &c.

the progress of corruption, came to light, and these extended to offices in the army and navy. These practices, which continued till the very last war, especially that of offices in the commissariat—committing the most villanous species of speculation, that of purchasing up bad provisions at a low price for the army and navy, and charging the country for the best, whereby our brave soldiers and sailors were often most basely treated, and were rendered physically unable to discharge their duties, and thus undermining our very fame in war—was charged on no less persons than Admirals Russell and Herbert. Nay, it is now known from Macpherson's papers, that Russell, high admiral of England, and created by William, Lord Orford, was, with Admirals Delaval, Killigrew, and others, arrant traitors, and in direct correspondence with the expelled James.

The manner in which the followers of William—who, be it remembered, arrogated to themselves the title of reformers and patriots, the glorious whigs of 1688—loaded themselves with grants of forfeited estates in Ireland, and crown property in England, caused great discontent, and led to the actual passing of an act of resumption, which, however, caused only a partial disgorging of the booty, or a mere exchange of it from one hand to another. On his favourite, Bentinck, one of his Dutch followers, William piled estates most enormously. Soon after coming to the throne, he had conferred on this man, not only the three manors of Denbigh, Bomfield, and Yale in Wales, but also lands alleged to be worth 3000*l.* a year, and the whole not worth less than 100,000*l.* This created a dreadful outcry amongst the fiery Welshmen. They declared that royal services and homages were inseparably connected with the tenures of these estates, and that the king evidently meant to make Bentinck Prince of Wales. Mr. Price, who presented their petition, denounced not only Bentinck, but the Dutch generally, in no measured terms. He declared "that they had planted themselves amongst us, some in the king's council, some in the army, some naturalised, some made denizens, and that their common traders had seized on the very skirts of the great city of London." Such was the fury that William abolished this grant, but immediately made others to his favourite, of the wealthy and extensive manors of Grantham, Drakelow, Pevensay, East Greenwich, &c., in the several counties of Lincoln, Cheshire, Sussex, and Kent, together with the manor of Penrith in the county of Cumberland, and other manors in Norfolk, York, and the Duchy of Lancaster. Such were the splendid estates heaped by the Dutch king on his follower—estates which soon raised the family to ducal honours.

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But it was not in England only: in Ireland also, the bounty of William to his Dutch and other followers was enormous, at the expense of the adherents of James. By a report of the House of Commons, it appeared that the persons outlawed in England for participation in James's attempt to regain the throne, were fifty-seven; in Ireland, 3021; that the lands forfeited in Ireland were 1,060,792 acres, valued at 211,623*l.* a-year, and which, if sold, would fetch 2,685,138*l.* Out of these had been granted, under the Great Seal of Ireland, to Henry Sidney, who helped to bring William in, 49,517 acres, besides his having received the title of Lord Romney; to the Earl of Albemarle, one Pelling, of Guelderland, a great favourite of the king, 106,633 acres; to William Bentinck, Lord Woodstock, the son of Lord Portland, 135,820 acres; the Earl of Athlone, the Dutch General Ginckel, 26,480 acres; to the Earl of Galway, that is, Rouvigny, a French Huguenot officer, 36,146 acres. There were also no less than 95,649 acres, worth 28,955*l.* a-year, the Irish estate of king James himself, granted to Mrs. Elizabeth Villiers, William's mistress, whom he had created Countess of Orkney. These, the resentment of parliament, or rather the jealousies of parties, caused to be disgorged; and with these an immense mass of property that the tories had seized on in England during the interval between the expulsion of James and the accession of William. This was, however, only of temporary effect, and these lands were, at various times, all got into their hands by the aristocratic harpies round the throne, and now constitute the overgrown wealth of many present proud families.

Queen Anne was a tory from spirit and education, and no sooner did she mount the throne, than she remodelled the ministry, threw out the remainder of William's whigs, and established a thorough tory government. The peculiar feature, however, of this reign is, that it was altogether a reign of women: of the queen nominally, but of her female favourites really. Strong as Anne's tory predilections were, yet the celebrated Sarah Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough, backed by the military renown of her husband, and the very strong party of the whigs, contrived to push the tories out of power, and to establish a whig government, which held the reins for some years. Singularly enough, however, she became superseded by a favourite of her own introduction, her cousin Abigail Masham, who began as woman of the bed-chamber, and ended as Lady Masham,* completely ousting the Duchess of Marlborough from favour, and introducing and establishing tories. She was the making

* Whence the modern term of an Abigail.

of Harley, a relation of hers, who became minister and Earl of Oxford, by introducing him up the backstairs (whence the term backstairs influence) to her mistress. In these schemes the celebrated St. John, who grew into Lord Bolingbroke, was mixed up, and Dean Swift was their base and venal instrument, with his lying pen dipped in the most acrid gall of a callous spirit. His expected pay was a bishopric, and, with his talents and unscrupulousness, would have most probably turned out the primacy itself, but the game was out too soon, and he retired to Dublin to thwart the whig government of George I. as much as possible there, and acquired great popularity by making Wood's copper coinage a plea of protection. Swift hated the Irish, but he equally hated the whig government, and cared not by what means or at whose expense he annoyed it. Wood, in this instance, became his victim. The copper coinage for Ireland had frequently been made in England by contract. Wood chanced now to be the contractor. On Swift's outcry that the Irish were robbed and cheated by a base speculator, government ordered Wood's coinage to be assayed by Sir Isaac Newton, who declared it better than contracted for. This, however, availed nothing. The Irish blood was up; Swift kept blowing the flame of their fury, and the coinage never could be introduced, by which Wood, who had a family of nine sons, suffered a loss of 60,000*l*.* There is little doubt that the splendid visions of Swift's anticipated mitre, and this disappointment, not only condensed immensely the venom of his wit, but tended to lead him finally to the mad-house.

But the vengeance which the tories took on their adversaries the whigs, on regaining power for a time in Anne's reign, is perhaps the most startling thing in the history of party. It is a monstrous demonstration of the length to which the rancour of party faction can go. It shows how completely the good of the country is forgotten in the selfish struggle for dominion and national plunder.

The whigs had steadily pursued the war against Louis XIV., in which William had been engaged all his life. For nearly half a century, that is, from 1667 to 1713, had that French monarch driven on a desperate contest for the destruction of the liberties of Europe. In Spain, in the Netherlands, in Holland, in Italy, and Germany, had his generals, Catinat, Luxembourg, Condé, Turenne, Vendôme, Villars, Melac, Villeroy, Tallard, &c. &c., led on the French armies to the most remorseless devastations. To this day, the successive demon deeds of Turenne, Melac, Crequi,

* Ruding's Annals of Coinage.

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and their soldiers are vividly alive in the hearts and the memories of the peasantry of the Palatinate, where they destroyed nearly every city, chased the inhabitants away, leaving all that beautiful and fertile region a black desert, and, throwing the bones of the ancient Germanic emperors out of their graves in the cathedral of Speyer, played at bowls with their skulls. To extinguish Protestantism, and to extend the French empire, appeared Louis's two great objects, in which he was supported by all the spiritual power of the king of superstitions, the Pope. Revoking the Edict of Nantes, he committed the most horrible outrages and destruction on his own Protestant subjects. He hoped, in the subjugating of Holland and the reformed states of Germany, to carry out there the same horrors of religious annihilation. Except in the person of Buonaparte, never had the spirit of conquest and of political insolence shown itself in so lawless, determined, and offensive a form as in this ostentatious monarch. William III., before his accession to the British throne, had been the most formidable opponent of his progress. But he had contrived to set his grandson, Philip V., on the throne of Spain, in opposition to the claims of Austria, and by the fear of the ultimate union of these two great nations under one sceptre, alarmed all Europe. In vain was the united resistance of Austria and Holland, till England sent out its great general, Marlborough; and the names of Marlborough and the Savoyard, Prince Eugene, became as those of the demi-gods in the temple of war, and Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet, arose from their ages of obscurity into continental pyramids of England's military renown.

But of what avail was all this renown? What was won by it, except the empty glory itself? At the crowning moment—at the hour of otherwise inevitable retribution to the bloody and unprincipled monarch of France, and of recompense to those nations whose blood he had so lavishly shed, and whose surface he had covered with ashes, ruins and horrors, instead of cities, peaceful villages and fair fields—the whigs were expelled from office by the Tories, and all the fruits of this long and bitter war were snatched away from us and our allies. To deprive the whigs of the glory of a successful war, to dash down as abortive all Marlborough's triumphs, these men rushed into peace without consulting the allies, and left no results to the great European struggle but the blood that had been shed, and the misery that had been endured. Louis, then 85 years of age, and tottering towards the grave, saw himself at once released from the most terrible condition into which his wicked ambition had plunged him—from the most terrible prospect of humiliation and disgrace

which could wring such a mind. He had reduced his kingdom to the last stage of exhaustion by half a century's incessant contest with Europe; by bribing the English monarchs Charles II. and James II., and many English nobles, to refuse help to the suffering continent; and by bribing and paying the armies of German princes whom he could thus induce to become traitors to their nation, his people were fiercely embittered against him; no taxes could be raised; his best generals were defeated on all hands, and a short time would most probably have seen Marlborough and Eugene anticipate the allies of our day by marching direct upon and taking possession of Paris. So sensible was Louis of all this, that his haughty tone was totally gone; he ordered his ambassadors to give up Alsace, and even to assist in driving Philip, his own grandson, out of Spain, by privately paying the allies a million of livres monthly for the purpose. The tories came in at this critical juncture, and the whole was changed. To annihilate all the glory of their rivals, the whigs, they at once offered Louis a separate and a far different peace. At once he again elevated his head and his heart; Alsace remains to this time a part of France; Spain has descended to the Bourbon; and the glory of Marlborough is without a single result, except Blenheim House, the dukedom to his family, and *sixty-two millions and a half of taxation*, which that war cost to the English people, of which *thirty-two and a half millions* yet remain as a portion of our great debt! Thus we pay still every year, and our posterity must continue to pay so long as the national debt lasts, *one million and twenty-five thousand pounds interest* for Marlborough's glory, besides having given his family its large estates, and for the traitorous conduct of the tory section of the aristocracy of that period. Such was the vengeance, indeed, which the tories of 1713 took of their country and their country's fame, nay, of the welfare and happiness of all Europe, for the success of the rival section of that aristocracy which claimed and still claims the wealth and government of England as its heritage. The peace of Utrecht roused the boundless indignation of the whole civilised world. Volumes have been written in reprehension of it, and even enlightened conservatives of our time, as Hallam in his Constitutional History, join in the condemnation. In the histories of Germany and Holland that ignominious contract stands as a sable seal against our honour.

The whigs maintained one long possession of office through the reigns of the Georges I. and II. Whigs, so-called, were they, but in nothing except the name to be distinguished from tories. As to the principles of the revolution of 1688 all parties came, whether sincerely or not, to recognize them, and in the practice

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of arbitrary government, in violation of the constitution, in all the corrupt practices of borough-mongering, and plundering of the nation, these so-called whigs were as daring and constant as any tories possibly could be. Of their *animus*, of the real spirit that animated them, we may take as a demonstration an opening passage of a modern history describing their rush into office on the accession of George I.

"Not a moment was lost by the whigs in England in putting forth claims to the honours and emoluments of office. The bishopric of Ely, and every good thing that happened to be vacant in the church, was asked for, and every place at court, such as the captaincy of the band of gentlemen pensioners, the groomship of the bedchamber, &c., was grasped at by several competitors. Baron Bothmar who was made the medium of these applications to Hanover, recommended Lord Halifax to be first lord of the treasury, with Mr. Boyle and Mr. Walpole for his colleagues, and Lord Orford, the double-sided Admiral Russell of former days, to be first lord of the Admiralty. He afterwards recommended strongly that the Duke of Shrewsbury, who had received the treasurer's staff from the hand of the dying Anne, should be *allowed* to retire; that Marlborough and Sunderland should be *satisfied*; Stanhope and Cadogan provided for, and that then they should think of doing something for Lord Somers. The Earl of Manchester, who had been ambassador in France and at Venice, begged to be made lord of the bedchamber. Lord Sunderland wanted to be secretary of state, and Lord Townsend provided for some other way. Bishop Burnet recommended his own son as a groom of the bedchamber; Lord Hertford wanted to be a lord-in-waiting; the Duke of Buckingham begged that his duchess might be lady of the bedchamber to the princess. The Duke of Grafton, one of the natural sons of Charles II., desired earnestly to be of the king's bedchamber, and Bothmar gave him a good character and recommended him," &c., &c.*

This may be taken as a specimen of that display of greedy hunger for the loaves and fishes which has marked every accession, and every change of ministry from that time to the present, be the applicants whig or tory. Why, then, make any further distinction between the parties when so little or none ever really existed? Sir Robert Walpole, the great whig minister, who held office, with little interruption, for the long space of twenty-eight years, that is, from the accession of George I. in 1714,

* Knight's Pictorial Hist. of England.

till 1742, twenty-one of which he was prime minister, was, in fact, the man who planned, carried out, and brought to systematic perfection that grand scheme of ministerial corruption, which enabled government, with a show of constitutional liberty, to rule the nation on the subtlest principles of despotism. He bought up, successively, the old rotten boroughs, or the possessors of them. He thus assembled round government a phalanx of aristocrats in the House of Lords, and made himself master of such a majority in the House of Commons, that all opposition fell before him. He carried on the grand continental wars of those monarchs, which cost us *fifty-four millions*; and, as we shall see in tracing the cause of this corruption, lavished the money of the people so profusely on these objects, and in every way, that the great aristocratic body, even those who were not in the ministry, felt the benefit of it. His majorities were, on an average, as 260 to 100, or 280 to 80. He made it his boast that "every man had his price," an assertion that has grown into a proverb. He began his career with a patrimonial estate of 2000*l.* a-year, as plain Mr. Walpole, and ended it with a princely fortune, a palace rather than a house, at Houghton, full of immensely valuable works of art, and as Earl of Orford. It would be a long catalogue to enumerate all those of his coadjutors that became converted from Mr.'s into Lords; and from mere nibblers at the edge of the government loaf into great landed proprietors, rolling in the country's wealth.

A specimen is given by Dr. King, in his *Political and Literary Anecdotes*, of the masterly and confident manner in which Walpole silenced any opponent by the logic of his country's money. He wanted to carry a question in the House of Commons, to which he knew that there would be great opposition, and which was disliked by some of his own dependents. As he was passing through the Court of Requests he met a member of the contrary party whose avarice he imagined would not reject a large bribe. He took him aside and said, "Such a question comes on this day; give me your vote, and here is a bank-bill for 2000*l.*;" which he put into his hands. The member made him this answer, "Sir Robert, you have lately served some of my particular friends; and when my wife was last at court, the king was very gracious to her, which must have happened at your instance. I should, therefore, think myself very ungrateful (*putting the bill into his pocket*) if I were to refuse the favour you are now pleased to ask me."

So thoroughly had Walpole established the principle of political corruption, that Carteret, his immediate successor, declared

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openly, as soon as he got into power, "*that it was impossible to govern England but by corruption!*"*

On this principle all succeeding administrations, were they whigs or tories, acted most faithfully. The whigs were almost wholly in power till the ascendance of Pitt in the reign of George III.; and from that period till the ascendance of Earl Grey in 1830, the tories, with the exception of the administration of "All the Talents," in 1806-7, were the ruling powers. It would require a politician of nice discrimination to point out a distinction between the principles of action in Walpole, Lord North, and Pitt. All ruled by the same means, the exclusion of the people from the House of Commons by the rotten boroughs, and the purchase of the favour of the aristocracy, and their slaves the counties, by the lavishing of honours, bribes, and places to them and their families; nay, so identified with each other were they, that Fox could coalesce with North. The whigs carried on all the wars from 1688 to 1783, terminating with the fatal American war, by which they lost to us that great country; and the tories, the still more bloody, dreadful, and fatal wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon, by which one despot was put down to restore and establish one in every nation of the continent. The whigs expended in their wars *four hundred and a half millions*, when money was of higher value; the tories, *three thousand three hundred and eighty-three millions!* Truly what the locust left the palmerworm devoured.

Till the two great parliamentary giants,—the Gog and Magog of party, Fox and Pitt, stood forth in their full strength of antagonism, the distinctive features of whig and tory appeared utterly lost. The only difference seemed to be of in or out of office; or of being the partisans of the king or the king's eldest son, who unhappily were, for party purposes, mixed up with a most unnatural and repulsive opposition. Such was the revolting position of George I. and his son, afterwards George II., and that of George II. and his son Prince Frederick, father of George III. One aspect was common to both parties, that of selfish profusion, and government by a paid majority. Nay, more frequently locust and palmerworm were devouring on one branch; whig and tory were so jumbled together in one scramble for the sweets of office, that, as it is said in the nursery rhymes, had you shot at the pigeon you had killed the crow too. A modern historian, characterising the year 1748, after the Rebellion and Jacobitism had been extinguished on the plains of Culloden, says,—“The voice

* Lord Mahon's History of England, Appendix.

of faction ceased ; the great struggles of party on broad principles of government terminated, and were succeeded by private personal contests for power and place, almost without any of the old distinctions of whig and tory.* The heterogeneous cabal was united only by the one all-absorbing activity of digging into the hoards of the Treasury. In every other particular they were just what Burke so happily described the Chatham administration of 1766, as an administration, "chequered and speckled : a piece of joinery crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed ; a piece of diversified mosaic ; a tessellated pavement without cement ; here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white ; papists and courtiers ; king's friends and republicans ; whigs and tories ; treacherous friends and open enemies ; indeed a very curious show. Persons who found themselves they knew not how, pigging together, heads and points in the same truckle-bed."

With the rivalry of Pitt and Fox, and the outbreak of the French war of the Revolution, the peculiar features of whig and tory became again visible. It is true that Burke was considered a whig, yet he who was the first and loudest to oppose and denounce the American war, was the first and loudest to raise the war-whoop against France, and plunge us into that most awful, bloody, and eventful of all contentions. But, as that war went on, as its horrors and evils became more and more apparent, as the corruption and extravagance at home by which it was maintained, became too audacious, the whigs were compelled to join the popular cry for a reform of Parliament, and to return to the principles of 1688. The Greys, Hollands, Lansdownes, Lambtons, &c., forming themselves into "The Society of Friends of the People," in 1792, and afterwards joined by other reformers, continued to demand an extinction of the war, and a reform of the huge abuses of the state. It was not, however, till after a period of the darkest distress and of the darkest desperation that England had ever endured, that, under such men as Sidmouth, Liverpool, and Castlereagh, that the whigs came into office again in 1830, and gave us in 1832 the Reform Bill as a remedy for our many evils. But when men had had time fully to mark the nature and working of this measure, it was discovered to be a delusion ; to give to thirty millions of people only about 600,000 electors, and thus to leave the constitution still in the hands of the aristocracy ; the people still excluded from their House, and all the business of aristocratic speculation still going on. From that hour the patriotic voices of the whigs became fainter and

* Knight's Pictorial History.

fainter ; the disappointment of the nation louder and louder ; till the abortive whigs were driven from office once more, and the tories reinstated ; a change which the people saw with the greater indifference because it saw that whatever party was in power, their burthen of debt and taxation continued steadily to grow, even during the years of profoundest peace ; that no effectual check was put on expenditure, and that each party had its own host of locusts, or palmer-worms, it mattered not to the people which, to feast on the public farm—

Fruges consumere nati :

A generation born

Merely to eat up the corn.

Such is the brief outline of the history of whig and tory, demonstrating that they are merely two sections of one body, whose interests, propensities, and practice are essentially the same. The plunder of the people is the fast creed of both, the only point of contention being who shall be the authorised plunderers. The cries of their patriotism when out of office are merely their way of announcing that they want to get in, as a parson says "*Noli episcopari*," when he wants to be a bishop ; and all coming round to the same eternal point of the political compass—the warm south of the Treasury.

This political fact has long been settled by the plain wits of country people, and illustrated by this anecdote. A farmer's wife on a cold day, which should have been autumn, but was untimely winter, went into the rick-yard where a man was thatching the ricks, and thus accosted him :—

Farmer's Wife.—"John, it is bitter cold."

John.—"Yes, missis, bitter cold is it ; it makes one's very bones dither, like a mon i'th' ague."

Farmer's Wife.—"Oh, it is indeed piercing cold ; don't you think, John, that a mug of warm ale with a little ginger in it would comfort you ?"

John.—"Ay, God bless you, missis, ay, that it would ; thank you a thousand times !"

Farmer's Wife.—"I'll go and fetch it you in a minute."

John.—"God bless you, missis ! God bless you !"

Away went the farmer's wife ; but arriving in the kitchen, where a good big fire was blazing away, she turned herself two or three times round before it, and then said, "Really, the climate seems quite altered ; I think John will do !"

There never was a party yet, which wanted to get into power, which did not stoutly sympathise with John Bull, and promise him warm ale with ginger in it ; yet which did not, on reaching

the jovial blaze of the government kitchen, turn round, think the climate altered, and that—John would do!

But in this old and hackneyed state trick none ever acted so barefaced a part as the whigs.

Let us now turn back, and take a nearer view of the true nature and cost of those wars in which both parties, for their own aggrandisement, have engaged us.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NATURE AND COST OF OUR WARS SINCE THE REVOLUTION.

"WAR to the death!"—still meaning to the life—

Cry Whig and Tory.—"War unto the knife!"

Ay, to the knife, and unto something more—

The knife and fork—old John to pay the score.

"Death! mutual hate!"—they whisper to each other—

"Don't be afraid—we only raise a pothier,

That while the silly crowd stands gaping round,

Our sharks may pick their pockets, every pound."

WILLIAM HOWITT.

THE aristocracy having, as we have said, removed the burthen of taxation from their own shoulders to those of the people, by the bargain with Charles II., war became to them, instead of an evil, a good; instead of a source of expense, a most profitable game. When, therefore, William of Orange mounted the throne of England, but at the same time left his kingdom of Holland exposed to the arts and aggressions of Louis XIV., the English nobility were only too ready to sanction his wars for its defence. As they had, moreover, a hankering after the crown lands, nothing could answer their purpose so well as to keep the king's mind engaged in his continental campaigns. At this era, therefore, commenced that long and preposterous series of wars reaching down to our own time, in which our blood and treasures have been poured over the whole continent like water. No purpose of real benefit to us was served by these expeditions of slaughter. With the exception of the efforts of the Pretender, which were soon and readily put down, no people during that period ever dared to attack or invade our island. Our fleets swept the ocean; and if we had confined ourselves to that, our

legitimate field of exertion, we should have always been in a condition not only to defend ourselves and our interests, but to extend a helping hand, in the time of real need, to our neighbours. Our fleets could readily have chased those of France from the ocean, blockaded her ports, seized on her colonies, and thus have distressed her to an inconceivable degree, while we could have poured in pecuniary, or other help, at various points to other nations, without encumbering ourselves with debts on their account, a sacrifice which no nation has a right to demand of another; a sacrifice that no nation has ever yet made for us.

But there was more than one purpose to be served by encouraging our propensity to foreign warfare. The crown lands were to be filched away by withdrawing the monarch's gaze from them to the field of distant contention, and the constitution was to be undermined while the zeal and attention of the people were rivetted on the same. Accordingly, amidst the delusive cries of glory! liberty! a great and free nation! the glorious constitution in church and state! the people have, from age to age, been kept fighting for everybody and anybody, like bulldogs, till they awoke from their dream of Quixotic folly, to find their money and their constitution gone, and the aristocracy enriched at their expense. The following particulars, taken from Spackman's lucid tables of our statistics, will present at one view the frightful consequences of our sanguinary madness.

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE DEBT.

1. The war of 1688, against Louis XIV.,	cost of taxes	16	millions; by loan	20	millions.
2. The war of the Spanish succession,	"	30	"	32½	"
3. The Spanish war, and the war of the Austrian succe- sion,	"	23	"	29	"
4. The Seven Years' war	"	52	"	69	"
5. The American war	"	32	"	104	"
6. The war of the French Revolution	"	263½	"	200½	"
7. The war against Napoleon	"	770½	"	388½	"
		1,189		834	
Reduced at different periods since the close of the war				66½	
Present amount				768	millions.

Here, if we add the two sums of taxes raised, and spent or raised, and of loans, the greater part of which remain, we shall find that we have the fearful sum of 2,023,000,000*l.* the cost of wars !

This enormous sum was paid chiefly, or perhaps, more correctly speaking, ostensibly, for helping the continental nations against enemies whom they might and would have withstood without us, had they been worthy of national liberty and existence. There was not a possession gained that we might not more readily and cheaply have gained by our fleet ; and there was a great nation, the United States of America, lost, which might have been well retained by a just government, and had we concentrated our forces on the seas. But in this awful amount of the cost of blood, Mr. Spackman has omitted the interest, and the millions of men murdered. Add these important items, and the account will stand thus :—

COST OF WAR.

The war of 1688 lasted nine years, and cost at the time	£36,000,000
Borrowed to support it, twenty millions ; the interest on which, in one hundred and fifty-two years at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. amounts to	186,400,000
The war of the Spanish succession lasted eleven years, and cost	62,500,000
Borrowed to support it, thirty-two and a half millions ; the interest in one hundred and twenty-seven years, amounts to	114,462,500
The Spanish war, ending 1748, lasted nine years, and cost	54,000,000
Borrowed to support it, twenty-nine millions ; the interest, in one hundred and two years, amounts to	103,530,000
The war of 1756 lasted seven years, and cost	112,000,000
Borrowed to support it, sixty millions ; the interest, in seventy-seven years, amounts to	161,700,000
The American war lasted eight years, and cost	136,000,000
Borrowed to support it, one hundred and four millions ; the interest, in sixty-five years, amounts to	236,600,000
The French revolutionary war lasted nine years, and cost	461,000,000
Borrowed to support it, two hundred and one millions ; the interest, in thirty-eight years, amounts to	267,330,000
The war against Bonaparte lasted twelve years, and cost	1,159,000,000
Borrowed to support it, three hundred and eighty-eight millions ; the interest in twenty-five years, amounts to	339,500,000
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	£3,383,022,500

NUMBERS MURDERED.

The numbers estimated of British alone, slain or perished in the war ending in 1697	180,000
In the war which began in 1702	250,000
In the war which began in 1739	240,000
In the war which began in 1756	250,000
In the American war, began in 1775	200,000
In the French war, began in 1793	700,000
	<hr/>
	1,820,000

Showing an expenditure of three thousand three hundred and eighty-three millions, twenty-two thousand five hundred pounds; with the loss of one million eight hundred and twenty thousand lives!

And this includes the number of British murdered alone! We may safely say that every Englishman in these wars has also killed his man. The fact is, that he has generally done far more than that. What an awful amount then of murder and crime does this present to our minds, heaped by the aristocracy on themselves and this nation, for the selfish purposes of their own aggrandizement! That this is no gratuitous assumption, let us, in as few words as possible, review the nature and object of those wars.

And here let us again impress it firmly on the mind and memory of the reader, that before the revolution we had no public debt. With all the long, mighty, and bloody wars in which England had before been engaged—whether the crown and aristocracy were tearing the vitals of the land, or seeking for glory, plunder, and fresh territory in France—we had never accumulated a debt. And why? For the simple reason, that till that period the aristocracy had to pay for the war charges as well as all others; and had they accumulated a debt, they knew that they would have to pay that too. But the infamous bargain with Charles II. for his restoration, which we have explained, altered this situation of things altogether. The aristocracy threw the burthen from themselves upon the people, and *then* it became not only a matter of indifference how much was spent, and how much debt was incurred, but an actual matter of profit, for the more war the more employment for them and theirs; the more expenditure the more speculation. Accordingly, William of Orange had not been long on the throne before the continental war, into which his accession led us, began to be very expensive; and in the eighth year of his reign, that is, in 1696, his ministers proposed the sure and bold scheme of *creating a debt*; that is, of forestalling the year's revenue by *borrowing money upon state counters or Exchequer tellers, bearing interest, and secured on supplies voted in succeeding sessions.*

This was the commencement and first creation of that mode of forestalling the revenues which has grown to so enormous an extent, and produced a debt of eight hundred millions in less than a hundred and fifty years. To place the selfish care of the aristocracy on the one hand, and its selfish recklessness on the other in their true light; its care to avoid loading itself with debt, while it was bound to pay it, and its care to load the people with debt when the people became bound to pay it, and they, the aristocracy, were for the most part the receivers of and gainers by it;—let any man only reflect for a moment, that from the hour that the aristocracy came into this country with the Conqueror, till the revolution, 622 years, they fought and scrambled, even for the crown, but shunned a debt actually far more than they shunned the devil; but, from the revolution to the end of the last war, 127 years, they spent three thousand three hundred and eighty-three millions in war taxes, and piled up a debt of *eight hundred and thirty-four millions!* If any poor man, ay, or any man, wants to know how this wicked waste and extravagance has affected him, and does hourly affect him and his children, let him look at the cost of articles of life before the debt began, and what that cost is now. Let him trace the growth of the debt and the growth of the cost of the necessities of life, and he will see that one has kept pace exactly with the other. He will see that for every man murdered by the aristocracy in the continental wars, and for every pound of debt laid on the nation to pay for it, Providence, with a rigorous hand of retribution, has laid on the lives of us, who suffered this to go on, a tax of dearth and scarcity. We have suffered our aristocracy to destroy life by millions abroad by our money, and the *means of life* to us, the permitters, have been made, in a direct and progressive ratio, more difficult of access. Wheat, that in 1688 was about 46s. per quarter, and sometimes much less, not more than 26s., gradually mounted with the debt, till, in 1793, it valued 127s.; and at the end of the war was still, with all our increased foreign supplies, 116s. Meat rose from 1½d. per pound to 9d. and 1s.; butter from 5d. to 1s. 6d. and 2s.; cheese from 1d. and 3d. to 6d. and 1s.; peas from 2d. a bushel, till, in 1800, they were 13s. 5d.; beer from 5s. 10d. a barrel to 20s. 4½d.; candles from 6s. 6d. per dozen pounds to 10s. 6d.; coals from 34s. per chaldron to 51s. 7d.; shoes from 4s. to 12s.; clothing, and all other articles, in like proportion, especially house rent.

Lord Bolingbroke, who immediately foretold that this creation of funds, by forestalling and borrowing, would prove fatal to the liberties of the country, by annually increasing taxes and the power of the crown, explains the reason of members of the

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Commons supporting such a scheme, by saying that few looked at the consequences, but only to some selfish and immediate object. "The notion of attaching men to the new government, by tempting them to embark in the same bottom, was a reason of state to some; the notion of creating a new, that is, a money interest, in opposition to the landed interest, or as a balance to it, was a reason of party to others; and the opportunity of amassing immense estates by management of funds, by trafficking in paper, and by all sorts of jobbing, was a reason of private interest to those who supported and improved this scheme, if not to those who devised it."*

Whatever were the notions of different parties, the thing was done, and from this hour the torrent of our expenditure and corruption flowed on merrily. William's war, continued by his sister-in-law, Anne, began for the defence of Holland, lasted, as we have shown, twenty years, and cost ninety-eight millions and a half; all the benefits of it being thrown away, as already stated, by the tories at the peace of Utrecht, to mortify the whigs.

With the accession of the Georges, we had no longer Holland to defend, but a much more unimportant piece of land—Hanover—and, as it will be seen, at a greater cost. George II., in 1739, entered into what was called the Pragmatic Sanction, or a treaty to maintain the throne of the Empress Maria Theresa of Austria. In this war, one Frederick the Great of Prussia, or in other words, a great robber, who wanted instead of a duchy, a kingdom, and on the watch, when he might best seize on his neighbours' territories—he fixed first on the empress's territory of Silesia; and George, trembling lest he should next cast a longing eye on his little electorate of Hanover, and being equally apprehensive of the kings of Sweden and Denmark, readily joined in the defence of the empress. After nine years, war, and the cost to us of fifty-four millions of money, the war was ended at Aix-la-Chapelle, by granting to Frederick his plunder of Silesia! We had paid, therefore, to say nothing of the very trivial interest that we had in the war, over fifty-four millions for nothing! But besides this German war, we had been waging a Spanish war; and for what? To resist the claim of a right of search on the part of Spain; to assert one, of our sailing in the Spanish seas or trading on the Spanish main. So entirely was the original cause of this war forgotten at the time of making the peace, that the odious claim of a Spanish right of search was never once mentioned in the treaty, nor did it throw

* Letters on History.

open the Spanish main to our trade and shipping. It did nothing but revived for four years what was called the Assiento, a monopoly given us of supplying Spanish America with African slaves! "Old Walpole," says the historian, "might have turned him in his grave, and uttered a groan for the blood and treasure which had been thrown away."

But now came a most singular turn of affairs. Austria, for whom we had been thus fighting, paying, and bleeding, showed herself ungrateful. Frederick, *against* whom we had been thus fighting, wanted more of his neighbours' territory; he wanted not only to pare down Austria, but Saxony also, and we actually joined him in his bandit-like enterprise; sent soldiers to fight; and subsidized this great robber at the rate of 670,000*l.* per annum.* In this war called "The Seven Years' War," from the length of its duration, and which was terminated by the treaty of Paris, in 1763, we spent one hundred and twelve millions of money—"a sum" says Sir John Sinclair in his *History of the Revenue*, "which would have maintained the whole peace establishment of the then rate of expenditure, for a hundred and thirty years!"

But this was not all. We brought upon us by this proceeding and alliance, Austria, Russia, Spain, and France; and by taking the French colony of Canada, so exasperated the latter power that it seized the first opportunity of retribution, and succeeded in enabling the Americans, backed by Spain and Holland, in wresting our great North-American states from us, at a direct cost also of one hundred and thirty-six millions!

Such were the astounding and disastrous consequences of our intermeddling with continental politics and warfare; a proceeding in direct violation of the compact by which the house of Hanover was admitted to the British throne, which declared that England should not be drawn into any wars on account of the king's foreign possessions. Well might Sir Philip Francis declare in Parliament, in 1792, that "all German alliances were particularly to be dreaded, as being always attended with endless and impossible expense." Well might he protest, and which, indeed, every sensible man might from the first have done, that "the balance of power in Europe was not so much our affair, as it was that of the continental powers." Well might Fox, in the same debate, indignantly exclaim, that "*we stand forward the principal in every quarrel, the Quixotes of every enterprise, the agitators in all the plots, intrigues, and disturbances that are every day arising in Europe.*"†

* Knight's History: Hume; Becker's Welt Geschichte.

† Parliamentary Debates of the period.

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The consequences of this meddling, of this Quixotism, went still further. So far we had begun with defending Hanover, and ended by losing America. Well would it have been *had we thus ended*; but our bitterness over the interference of France, and the consequent loss of the United States, made us ready to leap in and take up arms against France on the first occasion of internal discord. She had freed America from our despotism; we would not suffer her to be freed from her own. When the oppressed people arose and put down the monarchy and aristocracy which had ruined and demoralised the nation, we banded with the despots of the continent to force back upon them the same besotted and imbecile dynasty. It was a most unjustifiable interference with the internal affairs of an independent people, and we paid for it in the most dreadful struggle that the world has yet seen—a struggle of twenty-one years of inconceivable deluges of blood, and of the expenditure of the incredible sum of THREE THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THREE MILLIONS OF OUR MONEY!

Many and splendid have been the pens which have been zealously employed on behalf of toryism, to defend this monstrous war, this banding of a free nation with a host of despots, to quell the efforts of an oppressed people for its emancipation, and to represent this horrible blood-bath, into which all Europe was plunged, not only as just, but as glorious. It has been represented as the cause of religion, of morals and sound government, of humanity, and even of freedom. There is no limit to what will not be said by paid or interested advocates in the very worst of cases. But spite of the multitude of eloquent articles which have issued forth in this cause, in books, in reviews, in journals and newspapers, the international maxim, that no nation has a right to interfere with the internal proceedings of another, has only grown and become more and more widely established. Now, bloody, cruel, atheistical, and insolent as the French revolutionists were, so long as they only wreaked their fury on their oppressive government, and even on themselves, neither we nor any other people had a right to interfere. But it is unquestionable that the Austrians and Prussians, with the Prussian king, William Frederick, and the Duke of Brunswick, did first proclaim war on France, and threaten to lay her as flat as a field. They received their overthrow at Jemappe. After this there is nothing to be said in defence of this war on our part. We banded with these aggressors, to force back on the people of France a government which, in characters of blood they had denounced on the walls of Paris, as odious to them. Then, however, comes the second argument in favour of our coalition.

Napoleon began a career of conquest which threatened to lay all Europe at his feet. He was lawless, faithless, and incapable of being treated with, for he could not be bound by any treaty. There was nothing for it but by force, and combined force, to put him down.

True, in our attempt on the internal liberties of a great nation we had raised a power, a spirit; and out of the midst of this spirit or atmosphere of enthusiastic and patriotic defiance, an apparition that rose towering above our heads, and threatened to destroy all that resisted. He broke down all obstacles to his ascension to the day, and trod scornfully under his feet all the nations of the continent, and their despots. Napoleon was, indeed, possessed with a spirit of insatiable conquest, and of haughty, insolent domination that demanded justly repulse and humiliation. But here comes the all-important question, a question most commonly lost sight of—Whose business was it to do this? Was it for England quixotically to take upon herself almost the whole giant contest? Was she to stand in all parts and places with money-bags, with men, with arms, with ships, to defend not merely herself, but the whole world? Was it proper, or demanded by sound reason, by common sense, nay, even by interest, sympathy, or humanity, the most urgent and god-like reason of all, that England should waste her energies, impoverish her people, and mortgage her property for countless generations to come, to rescue all other people?

First, we must inquire whether these people were rescuable by such means, and at such stupendous sacrifices; whether they were at the time, and for a long time, rescuable by any means.

We admit that England acted a great and generous part; and that in the terrific contest, her strength, her resources, her bravery, and indomitable spirit, developed themselves in a magnificent degree; but still there comes the question, Was our conduct as wise and business-like as it was generous? Was our unbounded aid actually necessary and prudently applied? We answer that our conduct, taken in the best light, was that of a generous madman. The man who should think of beating down the walls of Newgate with his own soft hand, in order to liberate an imprisoned friend, were not more insane.

It is a great truth—one which should be written large on the council-chamber walls of every people—that a NATION WHICH CANNOT DEFEND ITS OWN INSTITUTIONS IS NOT WORTHY OF THEM, FAR LESS WORTHY OF BEING DEFENDED BY OTHERS. It is another truth, equally sure, that no nation *can* maintain the liberties of another, which is not capable of defending its own. But here

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was not a single nation, but a whole continent, impotent against a single nation. Here was a mighty constellation of nations—Germany, Prussia, Austria, Russia, Spain, Portugal, Holland, Belgium, Italy, nations of some hundreds of millions of inhabitants—all incapable of defending themselves against France, a nation of some forty millions of people.

There must have been a cause for this, far deeper than the genius of the French commanders, or the rapid mastership of French military tactics. There was! It was the effeminacy and degradation of these nations, the consequence of despotic government, and aristocratic disintegration. A writer who has, perhaps more than any other, contended for the justice and necessity of this war, the writer of Knight's History, yet says—"In reflecting on the power, the decision, and undoubted military genius of Buonaparte, people have left too much out of consideration the miserable folly and wickedness of continental governments who made up his game for him, and played into his hands; who put the knife into his grasp, nor complained, nor attempted to wrest it from him till they found it at their own throats." Russia was a great horde of barbarous serfs; Poland had been first unnationed by its aristocrats, and then dismembered by its vulture neighbours; Germany was carved, by the usurpations of its aristocracy, into *two thousand* small states. The rest of the nations were equally enslaved and emasculated, and they fell an easy prey.

Now, under such circumstances, as the English government should have asked, and would have soon learned from experience, was it possible to help such people? The rapid ascendancy of France was a lesson from Heaven on the necessity of keeping alive in a nation the popular spirit, and a manly spirit of active union. "God," says the adage, "helps those who help themselves." It is a sublime truism; and no mortal or immortal power can help those who cannot help themselves. The nation that cannot maintain its freedom against its own government, cannot maintain it against external foes.

Before those nations could, therefore, be rescued, and the career of Napoleon stopped, it was absolutely necessary that they should pass through the baptism of a bloody and cruel regeneration. They must be beaten, trodden on, insulted, robbed, and tortured in body, mind, honour and estate; in every feeling of manly pride and spirit, till they rose in the rekindled wrath of actual men, and *then*, and not till then, would the foe retreat before them. "You may depend upon it," said the gallant Blücher in 1806 to Bourrienne, the French minister at Hamburg, "that when once a whole nation is determined to shake

off a humiliating yoke, it will succeed. I rely on the future. It is impossible but that the time will come when all Europe, humbled by your Emperor's exactions, and impatient of his depredations, will rise up against him. *The more he enslaves nations, the more terrible will be the reaction when they break their chains.*" If our insane ministers had but had the knowledge of human nature which this wise and brave man possessed, and *had relied on the future*; had they waited till the nations were scourged by Gallic insolence into the true chain-breaking temper, instead of throwing their money by handfuls amongst effeminate slaves and selfish despots; had they waited for the moment of the rising of the real spirit of independence, they might have spared us our national debt, and yet have come in at the rescue of Europe. For Blücher's words were a prophecy; and in vain did Buonaparte, for nearly twenty years, goad, tread upon and insult the spiritless dreamers of Germany; they awoke not to a sense of their national degradation, and all our wealth and arms were thrown away upon them.

Regardless, or ignorant of this great truth, we went on from year to year, putting arms into hands that at the first sight of an enemy ran away and left them. We subsidized monarchs with our annual millions, to raise troops and fight for *their own hearths and homes*, and the French came and levied this very money in contribution. We actually maintained the war *for the French*, and furnished them with arms and money to fight against our soulless allies and ourselves!

If the history of our continental subsidies and their application could be written in its naked reality, and as it is ridiculed on the continent, it would present a revolting and humiliating scene. The hard-earned money wrung from our own brave and hard-working people, till they rose in their misery, and even threatened king and government with destruction, went to be divided amongst a host of despots and harem slaves. It went to pamper the sloth and lust of whole styes of great Westphalian boars, and other German swine. It went to pay the debts and mistresses of men that were loathed by their own people as monsters of sensual filth and grovelling petty princes who had not a soldier to bring into the field, such was the ignorance or the criminal carelessness of our Government, received large sums with which they satisfied greedy concubines and long-waiting creditors, and then plunged into still deeper sensual mire, in reliance on the lavish, unscrutinizing, and exhaustless subsidies of England. The stories of such facts that are circulated in Germany, are painful to English ears.

Those princes that did bring men into the field, such as the

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Hessians, Brunswickers, &c.,—the Menschen-Verkäufer, or Mansellers, as they are styled by their own people, were rapacious beyond all example. During the American war, we had employed these Hessians, Brunswickers, and the like, at a cost that excited general indignation. Besides paying 7*l.* 10*s.* for every man, the Duke of Brunswick, who furnished only 4084 men, had an annual subsidy of 15,519*l.* The Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, who furnished 12,000 men, had 10,281*l.* a-year; the hereditary Prince of Hesse, for his miserable quota of 688 men, had his 6000*l.* a-year! And besides this, we were bound to defend their territories from all attack! Nay, besides their annual subsidies, Brunswick was to receive *double subsidies for two years after his troops were dismissed*; and the others, like advantages. In short, these Mansellers had sold their slaves—the offscouring of their population, not raised as now by conscription, but raked together by any means,—something dear, about 17,000 mercenaries costing us a million and a half yearly. In the French war our bargains with these people were equally absurd. The Hessians had the like proportion of pay and subsidy; and the Duke of Brunswick for his wretched knot of 2289 men, his 16,000*l.* a-year subsidy! But, as we have said, this was not all;—we paid the Great Powers to our own actual mischief. We paid the Emperor of Austria from two to four millions yearly. The Austrians were, perhaps, the most honest in the cause of all the Germans, and fought very doggedly, but with little judgment, and less success. They were so slow that they were actually useless in any attempts to co-operate with them. Nelson, who was sent to assist the South of Italy in conjunction with them, in 1794, was driven almost frantic by them. “This army,” said he, “is slow beyond all description, and I begin to think the Emperor is anxious to touch another five millions of English money. As for these German generals, war is their trade, and peace is ruin to them; therefore, we cannot expect that they shall have any wish to finish the war.”*

The subsidizing of Austria continued up to 1797, in which year we find in April a vote of 2,000,000*l.* to the Emperor, 1,200,000*l.* having been sent him only in November previous; and in the following October he made peace with Buonaparte at Campo Formio, and his states became subject to French levies which our money went to pay. Again, encouraged by a promise of money, the Emperor Francis declared war in 1809 on Buonaparte. This was done in May; and in October of the same year, in about five months, Buonaparte was in the Em-

* Southey's Life of Nelson.

peror's capital, and levied 3,000,000*l.* of English money on him for the expenses of the war.

Russia we subsidized at the rate of from two to three millions a-year. In 1799 we were paying the Emperor Paul 112,000*l.* a-month, with which money he built and repaired men of war, and in the following year swept with them our merchantmen out of the Baltic and Northern Seas; and we find the king of England announcing to his Parliament in April, 1801, that his late subsidized ally "had already committed great outrages on the ships, persons, and property of his subjects," having made a league with our enemies of Sweden and Denmark to do all possible mischief to our trade and people in the north, and to cut off from us all necessary supplies of corn thence!

This was madness enough on our part, but was far from the worst. We were not only subsidizing all, even the smallest powers of Europe, such as Sardinia, at 400,000*l.* a-year, but we were actually in league with all the most confirmed villains in it, down to the very Dey of Algiers, who was, in fact, licensed by us to practise his corsair atrocities on Christian nations.* At the very announcement of our coalition against France, who were our allies? Prussia, Russia, and Austria, the very powers that for years we have so vehemently taunted with the violent dismemberment of Poland. In 1793, when we had issued high-sounding manifestoes, that we and our allies were going to chastise the French for their crimes and their robberies, and our Duke of York had advanced into the Netherlands to meet those allies, where were they? Busy in robbing and dividing Poland amongst themselves! "The arguments used by the spoilers," says the historian, "threw ridicule and discredit on our manifestoes, and made the French believe that the coalition meant also to plunder and partition France."

It was a melancholy farce. We were pretending to enforce justice on a great nation, in company with the most notorious robbers in all Europe. This unfortunately, however, was but one occasion of this kind; a still worse occurred in 1794.—The allies were again preparing to make a grand stand against the French in the Netherlands. The king of Prussia, who had in reality been tampering with the enemy for a separate peace, declared, that unless he had a grant immediately of 2,200,000*l.*, he would march off. The money was granted, as money always was, if asked for, even under the most suspicious or absurd circumstances as the present, and he did march off still, and to some purpose. He did not appear in the field at the time

* Knight's Hist. of England, vol. viii.

appointed with the allies, and it was found that he was gone into a still more disgraceful one. Kosciusko, the brave Polish patriot, had roused his countrymen for a last effort against their oppressors, our own dear allies, and with our money Frederick had marched off, joined the Russians, and defeating Kosciusko, made the third, and final partition of Poland! In the meantime our army in the Netherlands, in consequence of this desertion of Prussia, suffered great slaughter and repulse. We had, indeed, not only paid our 2,200,000*l.* for the extinction of Poland, but for the slaughter of our own troops! Few, when they lament the fate of Poland, and denounce in terms of deepest contempt both Russia and Prussia, its violators, are aware that we were the unremonstrating allies of these caitiff powers, and that our money, the troops raised and paid by us, and which, without this money, could not have stirred a foot, went to do this disgraceful work, making England an active and efficient partisan in it, nay, the most efficient of all, for without our pay they could not have effected it. *Having* effected it, the king of Prussia, who, as we have said, was at the very moment we paid him this 2,200,000*l.* tampering with the enemy, immediately made peace with him! Such was the manner in which our reckless ministers, with their eyes open, were duped out of their money for purposes most disgraceful to our name; and such were the men whom they were morally trying from year to year to bribe to the deliverance of themselves.

Thus in every point of view criminal and odious was that war whose monstrous cost Fox well said we paid "for not having any real representation." There is yet one more argument that has been advanced in favour of it, on mercantile grounds. It has been said it was our duty and interest to put down the French, and defend our continental customers. But it is now too well known that trade is not conducted on principles of preference, far less of gratitude, but of interest; and that, so long as our goods are best and cheapest, they will continue to be bought spite of all impediments, but no longer. The commercial accounts of this period strikingly confirm this theory. At the commencement of 1792 our exports were 24,905,200*l.*; our imports 19,659,358*l.*, or the total produce of our foreign commerce, 44,564,558*l.*; and this steadily advanced till the peace of 1815, spite of all Napoleon's continental or anti-English system, when our exports alone were 58,624,550*l.*! our imports 32,987,390*l.*; the total of our foreign commerce 91,611,926*l.*; thus exhibiting an increase of more than cent. per cent.! Nay, so imperative are the necessities of man, that British goods excluded from the ports of Hamburg, Antwerp, Rotterdam, &c., entered Europe

through Turkey and Russia, and, traversing the whole continent, were sold and worn in these very ports!

On the other hand, where is the gratitude of the nations, especially of Germany, for all our subsidies, and our gigantic efforts in their behalf? Is it shown in a preference for us and our trade? Does Germany remember these times, and these things? Does it say—"Never let us forget what the English did for us during the war and our days of calamity: let us buy all we can from them: let us encourage their commerce, for we owe them a mighty obligation, and they have covered themselves with debt for our rescue; and their children for generations must groan under it?"

We hear not a word of all this. We hear only of "the proud English,—the haughty nation of shopkeepers." We are hated by the whole continent for our greatness, and hated the more that we never were conquered, but were the witnesses of their humiliating subjection. Nay, we are not only hated and envied, but the very nation for whom we did so much, and suffered so much, and must continue to suffer, is zealously carrying out and establishing the very continental and anti-English system of the man that we put down and destroyed for them at the cost of such legions of our men and so many hundred millions of our money. Under the eager guidance of Prussia it has established the Zollverein, or League of Customs, to shut us not only out of the midst of all Europe, but also of America. It has already won Belgium to its plans—has given it a 30 per cent. preference over our iron, and other manufactures. It will speedily draw in Holland, Hamburg, the States of Denmark and Sweden, and finally France. At this moment it is in progress of treaties with Brazil and the United States, to shut us out there, and, in a word, in return for the war that we carried on of men and millions of money for them, is making upon us a war of tariffs, which threatens a far more practical annihilation of our commerce than ever entered into the fertile brain of Napoleon.

To comprehend then, finally, the cause, the progress, and the infamous nature of this war, for which the English people were called on to pay at the rate of one hundred millions a-year, and by a property-tax of 10 per cent., yielding ten millions of money, we must call to mind that it was a war for the support of regal and aristocratic despotism, carried on by a *junto* in our country of 156 borough proprietors, who had usurped the House of Commons, and sold it to the aristocracy. To see more perfectly how this monstrous fraud has taken such awful shape and vastness, we will review, as briefly as we can, the progress of political corruption during this singular period.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PROGRESS OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION FROM THE REVOLUTION OF 1688.

"The House of Lords—that Hospital of Incurables."—

LORD CHESTERFIELD.

"The House of Commons—a part of our fellow-subjects collected together by means which it is not necessary to describe."—SIR FRANCIS BURDETT—*Parliamentary Speech of 1810.*

WHEN we gaze in wonder on the on-rolling inundation of the expenses of this country during the last great war, at the annual charges of, now 30 millions, now 50, now 70, now 90 millions; ; at some 4,000,000*l.* or 5,000,000*l.* awarded to us for our expenses at the final treaty of Paris, being given to the king of Holland to repair his fortresses; at 5,000,000*l.* given to the allies to put them in motion against France, and 5,000,000*l.* more to forward the homeward march of their armies, though they received equal sums from the French; 14,000,000*l.* in one year given to our allies to get them to do their own work; at the debt grown from 244,000,000*l.* at the beginning of the war to 835,000,000*l.* at the end,—we are yet not to suppose that the bulk of this sum was, after all, given away to those foreign kings and armies to induce them to fight for their own cause, or was expended on the requisite supplies of our own troops. No! The same reckless and boundless extravagance distinguished every department of our government. It was the great aristocratic vulture preying on the rich and ever-springing liver of the bound Prometheus of Britain. The busy and ingenious people were to pay for all, and every department of government was full of eager and ever-thirsty leeches battenning on the general corruption. Neither was this corruption the growth of a day. Spite of the brilliant fame of "the glorious Revolution of 1688," this corruption was rife in the bosoms of the so-called patriots, and took daily deeper root, and grew ever more luxuriously from that hour to this. We have already shown the eagerness with which these patriots clutched at the good things of office; how they contrived to load themselves with William's crown lands; how they invented the fatal practice of borrowing on the future income, or rather, on the credit of the nation,—of forestalling and devouring in their own time the property of posterity. From that date advanced

steadily the corruption of the constitution and the infringement of the popular right. In this work the whigs were not the least active, and far the most arbitrary. By them the Habeas Corpus Act was repeatedly superseded; and in 1716, after the Scotch Rebellion, they made their first unwarrantable attack on the constitution by the repeal of the Triennial Act, and the passing of the Septennial. The severities exercised on the prisoners taken in the Rebellion had excited great disgust, and extended the spirit of disaffection; and, dreading the spirit of a new parliament, they resolved on what Smollett terms "the equally odious and effectual expedient" of more than doubling the duration of a sitting in which their power was in the ascendant.

It is very remarkable that the whigs, to this very day, as if ashamed to confess the traitorous deed of their party, have maintained a dogged adherence to the septennial form. However much reformers in other respects, in this they have stood fast. Even when arguing for other reforms on the ground of their being returns to our ancient constitutions, and while quoting proof after proof of this from our history, they have shown the most fixed aversion to return to this most established practice of our ancestors. A few years took away all pretext for the continuance of their constitutional encroachments, but instead of showing a generous haste to make reparation, they clung fast to this greatest blot in their history, and another singular phenomenon showed itself,—the tories became reformers,—such miracles can loss of office work—and were the great agitators for the abolition of this whig abuse. To the whigs too we owe the Riot Act, an Act which, however salutary when salutarily employed, is capable of the worst abuse, and was therefore characterised in Parliament, on its first introduction, "as an Act by which a little dirty Justice of the Peace, the meanest tool of a ministry, had it in his power to put twenty or thirty of the best subjects of England into immediate arrest without any trial or ceremony but that of reading a proclamation."

To the great whig leaders, Walpole and North, as we have stated, we are indebted for the complete organisation of the system of corruption, of borough-mongering, of pensioning, bribing parliaments, and ruling by overwhelming majorities of fictitious members. It will be useful to note a few prominent symptoms of the nascent mischief at different periods of its progress.

An inquiry which was made in 1695, presented a singular exhibition of the peculations of the "pure patriots" of the glorious Revolution of 1688. It was proved, for example, that the secretary of the Treasury had taken two hundred guineas for procuring the

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payment of arrears due to a regiment; the speaker of the House of Commons had taken a thousand guineas for passing through the house the Orphans' Bill. The chairman of the committee of this bill was also found guilty of receiving a bribe, and all these gentlemen were expelled. It came to light that the East India Company had paid various members for their secret services from year to year. In 1688, the year of the glorious Revolution itself, 1284*l.* were entered for this purpose; in the two following years, 2096*l.* and 3056*l.*; but in the last year preceding the life and death struggle between the old Company and a new one, this secret service money rose to the enormous sum of 167,000*l.* Sir Thomas Cook, who was at once governor of the Company, and a member of the House, was compelled by a bill of pains and penalties to make a disclosure of these matters. In the House of Lords, Danby, the Duke of Leeds, and lord president of the council, zealously resisted this bill, but it passed; and lo! it came out that the lord president himself had pocketed no small share of the money. It was shown that 40,000*l.* had passed through the hands of one Sir Basil Firebrace, and of this at least ten thousand guineas had found their way into the pockets of the lord president. The Commons commenced an impeachment of Danby, the lord president, who boasted in extenuation of his crime, what he had done for the glorious Revolution. The king dissolved the parliament, and there was an end of this matter.

It would be a curious and most edifying revelation, if we were able to trace out all the bribery of members of parliament and of government, which from that day had poured showers of wealth into the pockets of members, and influenced the fate of the Indies East and West, till the hour that Pitt himself startled the House with the announcement that the Nabob of Arcot had no less than eight representatives in it. The wealth of the Indies has been a perfect rain of corruption in cabinet and parliament. Lord Chatham in his day declared that—"The riches of Asia have been poured in upon us, and have brought with them not only Asiatic luxury, but, I fear, Asiatic principles of corruption. Without connections, without any natural interest in the soil, the importers of foreign gold have found their way into parliament by such a torrent of private corruption as no private hereditary fortune could resist."

The reign of Queen Anne was notorious for corruption through the rule of female favourites. As we have said, Sarah, the Duchess of Marlborough, was for many years the real queen, and the queen her obedient servant. Sarah gave away, sold, or divided the selling of almost all places; and her husband, the

great duke of his day, who was a most avaricious fellow, made good use of his wife's influence.

When the tide turned, Marlborough was accused of his gross peculations. He was charged with having appropriated more than half a million of the public money, by taking and keeping $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. out of the pay of the foreign troops maintained by England; with having taken 63,000*l.* from the contractors for the army bread, by taking, through his secretary, 200 gold ducats every time a new contract was signed, &c.

In fact, all was one scene of peculation and plunder. Great praise has been given to Queen Anne for remitting to the church the tenths and first fruits, for the augmentation of small livings; and indeed, it was much better to let the church have the whole and undisguised appropriation of this money, though the bishops took care to augment *great* livings instead of small ones out of it; for it had been, for many reigns, a subject of the most revolting corruption in the nation. The collecting of this money had been left in the hands of the bishops, and they had most liberally granted assignations on them for life, or for a term of years, to their relatives; thus taking care that a great portion reached not the treasury, but their own annuitants. The treasury, in fact, no portion of it reached; it was never paid in there, but had gone, to the amount of 16,000*l.* a year, amongst the monarch's favourites and hangers-on; and in Charles II.'s time, was appropriated to his mistresses and natural children. Thus, while the church was always crying, "Sacrilege! sacrilege!" this money was actually taken from the church to be spent on the royal harlots; but the bishops never uttered one indignant cry on this greatest of all scandals. Why? Because it would have turned attention on their own equally gross mal-appropriation of the same funds.

But to return. In Anne's reign succeeded to the Duchess of Marlborough, as favourite, her creature Abigail Masham, originally bed-chamber-woman, eventually Lady Masham. This woman made and unmade the ministers of her time; and accordingly, through her all good things of government were sought, and it became a most profitable business. She used to introduce her instruments up the backstairs to the queen, whence the origin of what is called backstairs influence. She made her relation, Harley, prime minister and Lord Oxford. When he thought he could do without her, he threatened "to leave her low enough;" but she very soon convinced him of his mistake,—had him dismissed from his office, and left him low indeed. But to the peculation and corruption, carried on from reign to reign by the court women, we shall return.

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In George I.'s reign, the same public robbery and government swindling went on, and the bursting of the famous South Sea Bubble presented an awful display of its nature and extent. The name and history of this singular affair are too well known to require from us more than the most passing mention.

Government had got a bill passed, creating a South Sea Company. This Company, on condition of having the national debt put into their hands, with certain fixed duties on wines, vinegar, tobacco, India goods, &c., and the privilege of the South Sea trade to remunerate them, engaged to pay off all the unredeemable annuities, then 800,000*l.* a-year, and liquidate the whole national debt within twenty-six years. The popularity of this scheme became immense. On the first day of opening the Company's books, stock to the amount of a million sterling was purchased. Everybody began to speculate in this scheme, and none so eagerly as the Prince of Wales, with nearly all the branches of the royal family and the officers of government. The mania of speculation became so great that all sorts of absurd schemes were projected, and "Change Alley," says Smollet, "was filled with a strange concourse of statesmen and clergymen, churchmen and dissenters, whigs and tories, physicians, lawyers, tradesmen, and even with multitudes of females. All other professions and employments were utterly neglected."

A very short time, however, proved how shamefully the public had been imposed upon. The South Sea trade was just no trade at all, and ruin and consternation ran with giant strides amongst all parties. When the causes which had induced government to sanction this base plan of Sir John Blunt, a South Sea director, and his accomplices, came to be investigated, it was found that *the great officers of state and the king's mistresses* had been bribed to support it to the amount of *one million two hundred thousand pounds!* That is, stock to that amount had been made over to them, which they had taken care to sell out before the daylight broke in upon the real nature of the transaction. The Prince of Wales cleared 46,000*l.*

Of the bribery money, it was discovered that 50,000*l.* had been given to the Earl of Sunderland, prime minister; 10,000*l.* to the Duchess of Kendal, one of the king's German mistresses, originally a Fräulein-Schnlemburg; 10,000*l.* to the Countess Platen, another of the king's German mistresses; 10,000*l.* to this woman's two nieces; 30,000*l.* to Mr. Secretary Craggs; 10,000*l.* to Charles Stanhope secretary of the treasury, &c.; that the same Charles Stanhope, had received a difference, or profit of 250,000*l.*, but that his name had been altered in the Company's books to Stangape; that Aislable, the chancellor of the exchequer, had accounts

with merchants and brokers to the amount of 794,451*l.*; that Aislabie had advised the Company, by their own authority, and without any warrant, to make their second subscription a million and a half, and that on their third subscription list, Aislabie's list amounted to 70,000*l.*; Sunderland's to 160,000*l.*; Craggs' to 659,000*l.*; Stanhope's to 47,000; and that on the pawned stock, which had been sold, was a deficiency, through Mr. Knight, of 400,000*l.*

The end of all was, that great numbers of innocent people were ruined; some of the culprits were punished; some absconded; a large amount was added to the national debt; but it did not escape observation that the king's mistresses, and the foreign favourites, who were believed to have gotten a far larger share of the booty than was proved against them, continued at the English court in full favour, to make further bargains. "It is difficult," says the historian, "to estimate the greed of these questionable personages, who had harassed the late minister, Stanhope, almost to death, and had induced him more than once to threaten his resignation."^{*}

It would swell this history to an enormous bulk to pursue regularly this course of corruption down to our own time. It is too well known to require it; and we shall, therefore, only state in one sentence, that it went on in every department of government, *pari passu*, with the advance of national taxation, till, besides the almost boundless speculation in every known office, the secret-service money voted by parliament at length amounted, in the year 1796, to nearly fourteen millions for the year. There are, however, two particulars to which we must devote a few words. The one is the corruption by means of women; the other, the frauds perpetrated by the pampered aristocratic placemen of the commissariat.

There is nothing which is more remarkable in the English people than their co-existent propensities to king-worship and freedom-worship. A moral and religious nation, abhorring licentiousness, and severe in its punishment of invaders of domestic purity, we have always, not merely tolerated in our monarchs a contempt for the conjugal virtues, but have shown a sort of fondness for their grosser vices. Nay, so far have our country-women forgotten in kings and princes their stern and inexorable judgments against the frailties of their sex, that they have come to deem it a real honour to be a prince's concubine. They have eagerly angled for the universal distinction; they have boasted of it; they have paraded it before the world when

* Knight's Hist.

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they have got it. There is no cause which has tended to diffuse demoralization through English society so much as this. The princes of Hanover, a heavy and dullish race, have still been always surrounded by a sort of harem of this kind. George I. had, besides English ones, two German mistresses, to whose rapacity we have just now, and several times referred. In the disturbances connected with the South Sea Bubble, in which we have seen that these German ladies, who, by the bye, were very ugly, were so conspicuous, the mob one day surrounded the carriage of one of them with great demonstrations of violence. She put out her head, and in her broken English said—"Why do you abuse us, good peoples? We are come for all your goods!" To which a fellow most aptly replied—"Yes, curse you, and for all our chattels too!"

George II. is said to have had little natural disposition to gallantry, but thought it an honour to him. He was, in fact, led by his education, and the evidence of public opinion, to think so!

George III. has been held up as a model of chastity and propriety; and a living historian has, on this account, heaped the most extraordinary praises upon him. "On ascending the throne," says the writer of Knight's Pictorial History, "George was only in his twenty-third year, yet he presented few of the graces, and none of the liveliness of youth. At the same time he was wholly free from the vices or irregularities which commonly attend that age with persons in his situation . . . Though so young, healthy, and robust, and though his predecessor had been so old, he was the first prince of his house to do without a mistress. A few months after his accession, he married, and from that time his fidelity to his consort was as remarkable as his previous continence."

This is a singular statement for a writer of a history of England, and especially regarding a prince of our time. Had he never heard of such a person as Hannah Lightfoot? Hannah Lightfoot was either the mistress, or the wife of George III.; and in either case, what becomes of this high-flown panegyric? If this fair Quaker was not the *legal* wife of George III., she was, at least, a more legal one than Charlotte of Mecklenburg, for she was a prior one, and was living at the time that he contracted his marriage with Charlotte. The moral and sober George III., "who was so free from the vices and irregularities" of his station and house, was in fact no other than a bigamist. This Miss Lightfoot was a young Quakeress. Beckford, in his *Conversations*, lately given in the *New Monthly Magazine*, gives this account of her and the marriage.

"George III., when Prince George, fell in love with a beau-

tiful Quakeress of the name of Hannah Lightfoot. She resided at a linen-draper's shop, at the corner of Market-street, St. James's Market. The name of the linen-draper was Wheeler. As the prince could not obtain her affections exactly in the way he most desired, he persuaded Dr. Wilmot to marry them, which he did at Kew chapel, in 1759; William Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham, and Ann Taylor, being the parties witnessing, and, for aught I know, the document is still in existence."

We have always understood that the documentary evidence was carefully preserved in the family of the descendants of this marriage, a highly respectable family of the name of G——n. We have often been informed by a Quakeress who resided in London at the time, that the friends of Hannah Lightfoot, aware of the attentions of the prince, were extremely anxious to get her married to a young man of her own society who was passionately attached to her. The day was fixed, nay, it is asserted that the marriage had actually taken place, when soon after the return of the bridal party from the ceremony, Hannah Lightfoot was observed to be restless, went to the window several times, and appeared to be in an absent state, or as if listening for something. A pipe and tabor appeared in the street, stopped and played awhile before it, and scarcely had it ceased when Hannah Lightfoot was found to have disappeared. On making search for her, her friends learned that she had left the house and been seen to enter a close carriage which stood in the next street, which then drove rapidly away. The suspicion fell immediately upon the prince. The distracted bridegroom gave chase, and overtaking the prince, I believe at Kew Palace, demanded, it is said on his knees, and with the most passionate pleading, the restoration of his wife, but in vain.

Now if it was the fact that George actually thus carried off the wife of another man on his wedding-day, it is a black stain on his memory, that no panegyric can wash out. If Hannah Lightfoot *were* thus married previously, she was not his legal wife, otherwise she had as fair a claim to the queenly crown as Elizabeth Woodville, Anna Boleyn, Catherine Howard, Jane Seymour, Catherine Parr, or Anne Hyde; for it is remarkable that the law forbidding royal marriages with subjects was not then made, but was passed by George III. himself. Of his marriage with Hannah Lightfoot there is no question, and it depends entirely on this wedding-day elopement whether Charlotte was a wife at all, or a queen at all. It has been asserted in high quarters, that George IV. when Prince of Wales, who was well acquainted with these circumstances, used to tell his mother that she was legally neither one nor the other, and used to alarm her on this head so as to

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extort money from her for his extravagances. Be that as it may, there is little doubt that in this fact George III. laid up to himself sufficient remorse to make him heartily desirous to pass the prohibitory royal marriage act, styled by the opposition in Parliament at the time, "An Act for the encouragement of royal fornication." Nor did the conduct of his brother, the Duke of Cumberland, leave him any want of a plausible pretext for it. The licentiousness of this person would have been held atrocious in any common man. He had seduced the young and handsome wife of Earl Grosvenor, and in the crim. con. trial on her account, his letters showed that his education had been so neglected that he could not spell. Grammar or punctuation, there was none in his writing.* *Before* this trial, which cast a young and beautiful woman from society, with utter wretchedness, the heartless villain had taken another mistress, a Mrs. H., in Hatton Garden; and then failing in a similar attempt on a Mrs. Horton of Derbyshire, he within fifteen months of his ruining the Countess of Grosvenor married her.

How long George III.'s connection with Hannah Lightfoot continued does not appear; but, early as his marriage with Charlotte took place, it must have been for some years, for a family of several children was the result. Tradition still points out the house at Tottenham where Hannah Lightfoot resided, and there is a private carriage road leading to it, still called the Prince's Approach. Dr. Fothergill, a celebrated Quaker accoucheur, was sent for and introduced blindfold to a lady in her confinement, of whom he obtained view enough to discover in her his old acquaintance Miss Lightfoot.

If the recollection of the abduction of another's wife, and of the pleading but repulsed husband, could not be very joyous to George's conscience, still less could the effects of this marriage,

* One of the most pernicious practices in England has been the importation of German princesses, perhaps the worst educated of all princesses. German men are generally well educated, German women generally as ill. The contempt for the female mind in Germany, is one of the worst features of the country; hence the wretched education, and the wretched moral character of our princes who have had German mothers. The mother of George III., and of this Duke of Cumberland, whose connexion with the Marquis of Bute was the scandal of the age, could only turn out ill-educated sons. Walpole says that George III. was brought up in duplicity, and that his first act was expressive of his character. Lord Malmesbury shows us what a wretched education Queen Caroline had, and how certain were the most disastrous consequences to succeed. The want of *moral truth* in old Queen Charlotte was propagated in the licentious character of her sons.

if they were such as are asserted. These are no less than that a son of George and of Hannah Lightfoot was retained about court, and advanced to the rank of a colonel when the Princess Amelia became attached to him, and George had the horror to discover that, unaware of the relationship, his favourite daughter had privately married her half-brother. The early grave that covered the daughter, and the insanity that overwhelmed the father, have been confidently attributed to these causes; and surely there could require nothing else. But George was not merely harassed by the terrors of conscience, and his life imbittered by mysterious connections; the wild licentiousness of his sons lay before his daily view. The notorious Prince William, afterwards William IV., and the unfortunate actress, Mrs. Jordan, left to perish in poverty and find a foreign grave; the scandal of the Duke of York and Mrs. Clarke; and the boundless and costly amours of the modern Tiberius, his son and successor George IV., with his Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Fitzherbert, Lady Jersey, &c., &c., and all the revolting scenes of Windsor, where his servants were sworn to "hear, and see, and say nothing,"—these were strange children, and strange results of George and Charlotte's moral house; they were shrewd reminders of his own transgressions, and enough to overturn an intellect none of the strongest.

Nor did two of George's sons forget their father's pranks amongst the fair Quakers. The Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, when very young men, resolved to see whether they also could not find some pretty innocent lambs in this demure sheepfold. Accordingly—we speak of a fact well known—they dressed themselves in female Quaker attire, and thus introduced themselves into the meeting of the Quaker ladies at the great yearly meeting of the society in London. One of them, however, forgetting himself, stuffed his hand into his pocket-hole, and revealed to the quick and terrified eyes of a near-sitting sister, a glimpse of buckskin breeches beneath! The alarm was given, and the two royal scape-graces were speedily compelled to withdraw, like Clodius from the mysteries of the Bona Dea.

But leaving the shameful history of the plunder of the public by royal prostitutes,—of the dreadful example to the nation of royal libidinousness, which converted our palaces into so many brothels, and which the abused people were made to pay for and uphold—a history which would itself fill volumes—let us turn to the department of the commissariat. This history is still more shameful than the other. It is that of the brave and glorious defenders of the country robbed, and their very lives, as well as the honour of the nation, endangered by the pampered aristocrats of office.

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From the very day of the Revolution, this has been in every reign a crying sin. The aristocracy not contented with having usurped the whole government, and with revelling in that corruption which they had introduced into it, have always endeavoured to make a still further profit by pocketing the full allowance for the food and clothing of our troops and sailors, and buying up at a low rate bad and unwholesome food, and inferior clothes and accoutrements. Our armies and navies, after all the vast amount of millions paid for them, have, in almost every instance, when they have come into the field, or into action on the sea, been half starved, and even when they have been supplied with food, supplied with the most vile, rotten biscuits, full of maggots, and with diseased and loathsome meat. A more horrible, and disgraceful, and criminal conduct than this is not to be conceived, and demonstrates more than anything else, the perfectly heartless and greedy nature of aristocracy, to which the lives, the blood, the comfort of our poor fighting men, and even the national honour, which depends on the health and hardihood of these men, are regarded as nothing in comparison of the chance of public robbery. If we are to believe the historian, not only through all this course of official fraud as well as of the generally enormous government and war charges, parliament never examined into the accounts.* "It is perfectly unknown to the House of Commons, *who never settle accounts*, whether the sums voted in the preceding session have been expended according to their several appropriations, or whether any amount remains unappropriated. There is no other country in the world that goes on blindfold like this, boasting itself to be the most celebrated of all others for mercantile precision and accuracy.†

It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that the nation has been so imposed on by an aristocratic parliament, greedy of its own interests, and winking wilfully at its own embezzlements; or that ministers and ministerial members have frequently, as was proved by Colonel Barré that they did, during the American war, gamble in the funds, at the nation's expense, on the strength of state secrets.

As it regards the robbery of the soldiers and sailors, Marlborough himself was shown to be a wholesale dealer in this way, and the evil grew daily till the American war, when it tended materially to lose us that country. On the breaking out of that war, we were found to have scarcely a soldier in that country,

* Knight's History.

† Wells on "The true State of the National Finances," p. 317.

except at Boston and in Canada, though the army cost us at that time 2,000,000*l.* a-year; and Lord North declared that the condition of it was admirable. Immediately on the opening of the war, the Americans, under Ethan Allan and the celebrated Arnold, surprised Forts Ticonderago and Crown Point, the keys of Canada. In one of these they found sixty soldiers, twenty of whom were drunk, and one sentinel on duty; while in Crown Point was neither guard nor garrison. Canada itself was within a hair's-breadth of being lost. When we had spent 50,000,000*l.* it was still the complaint that we had no army. When an army was at length conveyed over thither, it was in danger of being destroyed, not by the Americans, but by our own corrupt commissariat officers.

"A series of debates took place in 1777, on abuses in the commissariat; in the chartering of transports—wretched vessels hired of merchants, in which our poor soldiers suffered all the horrors of a middle passage, instead of being sent to their destination in good, commodious ships; in the contracts for supplying the troops in America with provisions, rum, &c., when it was found that these abuses existed to an enormous extent. Many members of the House of Commons, ruby-faced gentlemen who sate on the ministerial side of the house, sometimes speaking of king and country, but always voting with the Treasury bench, had been allowed to get profitable contracts—profitable to them, but slow death to the poor soldiers and sailors who ate their meagre, sapless beef, their carrion pork, and their mouldy biscuits. The Opposition affirmed that both at Boston and since, our brave soldiers had been destroyed by unwholesome provisions. Nor was this party invention, nor exaggeration; the monstrous evil existed as it had done for ages, and as it continued to exist down to a very recent date.*"

"The monstrous evil," indeed, actually drove our army, under the Duke of York, out of Holland in 1795. At the same time that we were spending millions on foreign troops and monarchs, our brave men—I again quote Knight's History—"were left with a miserable and fraudulent commissariat; an equally bad medical staff, and totally unprovided with the indispensable requisites in their hard and trying circumstances."

These circumstances were, a terrible winter, desertion of their royal commander, and general enfeeblement, fever and disease from want and bad food, so far as even it had been attainable. The army was furious with indignation, and justly, knowing that government had ordered a liberal supply for all their needs.

* Knight's History.

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It was one of the severest of winters; and an eye-witness, whose report was found to be correct, thus described the army hospital:—"January 21, 1795. Our hospitals, which were so lately crowded, are, for the present, considerably thinned. Removing the sick in waggons, without clothing sufficient to keep them warm in this rigorous season, has sent some hundreds to their eternal home; and the shameful neglect which prevails through all that department, makes our hospitals mere slaughtering-houses. Without covering, without attendance, and even without clean straw and sufficient shelter from the weather, they are thrown together in heaps, unpitied and unprotected, to perish by contagion, while legions of vultures, down to the stewards, nurses, and numberless dependents, pamper their bodies and fill their coffers with the nation's treasure, and, like beasts of prey, fatten on the carcases of their unhappy fellow-creatures, of whom not one in a hundred survives."—*Annual Register*.

The Duke of York had left the army, and was passing the winter snugly in London with his Mrs. Clarke or the like, or in wheedling some poor Mary Robinson from her husband into the snares of his royal brother of Wales, while his abandoned army was compelled to retreat for two months before the enemy, through the wretched and wintry country. The commissary agents, who ought to have prepared for their reception in the different towns, had deceived their employers, and had collected no provisions whatever. Their sufferings were as cruel as ever fell to the lot of a retreating army. Many were frozen to death; many dropped and perished through want in the sandy deserts between Utrecht and Zutphen, and only a miserable remnant embarked and reached England.

We give these as sufficient specimens of the ordinary system which continued down to the time of Sir John Moore's disastrous campaign in Portugal and Spain. His army suffered dreadfully from want of all sorts of necessaries, even powder and ball; and it was not till he was about to embark his flying army at Corunna, that he found 4000 barrels of gunpowder which had been brought from England many months before, and carelessly thrown out upon a hill above that town, while plenty of arms were stowed in the town itself, instead of the careless agents sending them on to him. And all this, though, the very year before, a searching inquiry had been made into the huge abuses of the military system, and the most astonishing disorder and peculation had been brought to light;—the barrack-master-general being convicted of overcharges to the amount of 90,000*l.*; and one Darwin, a colonel of a volunteer regiment, in collusion with him, being found to have had the handling of from three to

four millions of the public money, and to have perpetrated frauds of thirty per cent. in his contract for soldiers' blankets, bedding, coals, &c.

What was most horrible was, that while this unbounded waste was going on, everything was grudged to the soldiers and sailors. So poor was the pay to the surgeons, that few were to be had, and the men bled to death in battle in consequence. So poor was the pay of the sailors, never having been raised since the time of Charles II., though the nation now paid a hundred million a-year to the army and navy, that it led to the famous mutiny of the fleet in 1797. The same evil of speculation and fraudulent contracts had been destroying the sailors as well as the soldiers. The food was deficient in quantity, and of a quality, says the historian, "that a decent dog would hardly touch." They complained of the prize-money being nearly all absorbed by the admirals and superior officers; and of the haughty and tyrannical conduct of these officers. "The men," says Knight, "had been ill-fed, ill-paid, shamefully neglected by the country which depended upon them for its all; and in many cases, harshly and cruelly treated by their officers, and belly-pinched and plundered by their pursers." By a conduct as temperate as it was brave, they triumphed, and obtained the wages they demanded—the modest sum of one shilling per day!

How truly in this history are the words of the poet verified!—

————— "Self-love, stealthily at first,
And then in its own usurpation armed,
Bold and more bold and proudly confident,
In strength of what it stole, deemed right to have,
Against the use of other landless men,
More than its hand, or present use could turn
To its own profit;—so discovenanting
Its neighbour's right, and God's most earnest law,
That man shall buy his daily bread by sweat
Of his own brow; showing to industry
But th' husk of the fair fruit himself had set,
And raised and gathered up. Thus in the veins,
Exhausted most by toil, and where most needs
Bounteous supply, starving the weakly blood
Almost to water; and what penury
Had so diminished from stern daily use,
And from desert of patient industry,
Heaping it all into the listless cup
Of luxury."—**ERNEST.**

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CHAPTER XX.

PROGRESS OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION CONTINUED.

HAVING sketched thus briefly the revolting picture of aristocratic greed, which not only, while gorging itself to repletion, grudged the slightest portion of even common pay, food, or clothing to the nation's brave defenders, but had extended its corruption into every department of the state,—for the post-office, the customs, the excise, every institution displayed the same abandoned character—we come now to the important question:—How was it that this body had thus contrived to enrich themselves, enslave the country, and riot on its treasures?

It was by that art of diving—that burrowing and undermining system which introduced and characterised the third and present epoch of aristocracy. We have shown how they had secured the crown lands, and made captive the crown. The two sections of whig and tory then rivalled each other, both at the commencement of each reign, and also during its continuance, in heaping the most lavish allowance on the monarch, to immerse him in pleasures, and turn his eyes from their proceedings; so that the civil list of William III. was at once fixed at 700,000*l.*, a vast sum at the then value of money. This went on till George IV.'s income was 850,000*l.*, besides the revenues of Scotland, and those of the Duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster, amounting altogether to a million and half.

Having secured the crown, it remained only to secure the grand engine of real government in this country—the House of Commons. For this they now discovered a means. It was to employ the money of the people to destroy the people's political rights. The counties were already under their own influence, the boroughs were the things to be made prize of, and these were ready for their hands. They were no longer the abodes of the bulk of the people; trade and manufactures had revolutionised the whole status of population. The people were existing in new towns, to which the franchise had never been extended, and the old boroughs, the old places of popular abode, were inhabited by a few who were ready to be bought, or were wholly decayed; and were the property of aristocrats or others who were eager for purchase. By this means the ministry for the

time found nothing easier than to procure an overwhelming majority of purchased members, bearing the name of the people's representatives, but being, in fact, so many impostors and traitors; and these tools were kept in the people's house to vote away the people's money and their liberties.

The commencement of this plan is discernible beyond the Revolution, but it acquired new life at that period, the aristocracy having learned that though the people could not be conquered, it could be deceived. This scheme has, for its supporters, "worked well." So well did it work, as early as 1733, when Walpole brought in his famous scheme for extending the excise, that Pulteney, in Parliament, made this declaration:—"It is well known that every one of the public officers have already many boroughs or corporations which they look on as their property: there are some boroughs which may be called Treasury Boroughs; there are others which may be called Admiralty Boroughs; in short, it may be said that nearly all the towns upon the sea coast are already seized on, and in a manner taken prisoners by the officers of the crown. In most of them they have so great an influence that none can be chosen members of parliament but such as they are pleased to recommend. But as the customs are confined to our sea-ports, as they cannot travel far from the coast, therefore this scheme seems contrived to extend the laws of excise, and thereby the influence of the Crown, over all the inland towns and corporations of England."

Nor were the fatal consequences of this insidious invasion of the popular share of the constitution less clearly seen then than a century later. Wyndham the very next year said, "Suppose a minister possessed of immense wealth, the plunder of the nation, with a parliament chiefly composed of men whose seats are purchased, and whose votes are bought at the expense of the public treasure." In this he described Walpole and his purchased majority as plain as he could venture to speak, and the consequences, which he went on to describe, are exactly what we, at the present day, see and feel.

The purchase of these rotten boroughs, and the practice of bribery begun by the government, were soon adopted by the Opposition. It is stated that in 1741 the Opposition, aided by the promises of the wealthy old Duchess of Marlborough, of Pulteney, and the Prince of Wales, incurred considerable debts (which the nation, of course, had afterwards to pay) in the purchase of boroughs, and in practising bribery and corruption to an unprecedented degree.* The following year, when Walpole was

* Smollet; Knight.

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forced to retire from the ministry, a great clamour was raised against him, and an eager inquiry instituted into his corrupt practices. The king himself did all he could to swamp this inquiry; and to shield one of the most notorious objects of it, Mr. Edgcombe, who had managed the Cornish boroughs for Walpole, and who might have told many a Treasury tale, he withdrew him from the reach of the Commons by raising him to the peerage. Many a strange display, however, took place. The secret committee's report stated that, during an election at Weymouth, a place had been promised to the Mayor for his influence, and a church living to his brother-in-law: some revenue officers, who refused to vote against their conscience, were dismissed. A fraudulent contract had been given for like ends to two members of the Commons, Peter Burrell and John Bristow, for furnishing money towards the payment of the troops in the West Indies, by which they pocketed upwards of fourteen per cent.; and that whereas the secret-service money from 1707 to 1717 was altogether only 337,960*l.*, Walpole's amount, for the like number of years, was 1,453,000*l.*; a large part of which had been spent in bribing and corrupting electors.

The celebrated Bubb Doddington, in the reign of George II., returned five or six members himself, and was a noted hand at canvassing, bribing, and otherwise influencing boroughs for the ministry; for which services he was rewarded with a peerage, under the title of Lord Melcombe.

During this period that species of bribery at elections, called "treating," that is, bribing the poor electors with drink and food, began to make a prominent figure in our political annals. In 1766, Chatham prophesied that *this rotten part of our constitution*, as he termed it, could not last a century; which had a sort of verification. This extraordinary man who, as well as his extraordinary son, William Pitt, commenced as a zealous reformer, and could always play the part right vigorously when kept out of office, declared further, that "if this rotten limb did not drop off, it must be amputated." "In the commencement of George III.'s reign," says the historian, "owing to the success of this rotten borough system, the circumstance which must strike the eye in all arrangements, is the omnipotence of family connection—the juggling and selfishness of an oligarchy which could forget principles and everything but self."* In 1770, Chatham, in a fit of virtuous indignation, exclaimed, "The minister who is bold enough to spend the people's money before it is granted, *even though it be not for the purpose of corrupting their representatives*,

* Knight.

deserves death!" And on finding opposition to inquiry into government profusion, he made this remarkable declaration. "Does the king of England want to build a palace equal to his rank and dignity? Does he want to encourage the polite and useful arts? Does he mean to reward the hardy veteran who has defended his quarrel in many a rough campaign, whose salary does not equal that of some of your servants? or does he mean, by drawing the purse-strings of his subjects, to spread corruption through the people, to procure a parliament, like a packed jury, ready to acquit his ministers at all adventures? I do not say, my lords, that corruption lies here, or that corruption lies there, but if any gentleman in England were to ask me whether I thought *both houses of parliament* were bribed, I should laugh in his face, and say, "Sir, is it not so?"

The very next year compelled the House of Commons to make an example of one of the rotten boroughs—New Shoreham,—by disfranchising eighty of its freemen, and extending the franchise to the freemen of the neighbouring district, called the Rape of Bramber. The bribery, venality, and hypocrisy of this place, as disclosed, were of the most atrocious nature. The freemen had, it appeared, formed themselves into an association entitled "THE CHRISTIAN CLUB," professing to be solely established for the advancement of piety and evangelical charity: under this mask, however, they had disposed of the borough to the highest bidder. They returned General Smith for a sum of 3000*l.*, on engagement to build a church at Shoreham, and to benefit the place with 600 tons of shipping. Having done this in preference to another offer, and having quarrelled amongst themselves, this came out. In 1782, the very rotten borough of Cricklade was disfranchised, and Lord Rockingham declared that in several boroughs the elections depended chiefly on revenue-officers, and that nearly 12,000 of that class of persons, created by the late ministry, possessed votes in other places.

The frightful extent to which the public money was turned against every patriotic person and movement, was placed in a striking light by the disputed election of Charles Fox for Westminster, in 1785. He demanded a scrutiny, but this was protracted by the arts and money of government, so that in eight months only two out of the seven parishes of Westminster were scrutinised; by which it appeared that the whole would occupy, at the shortest, three years. Fox declared that it would cost both parties 30,000*l.* a-year, or a total of nearly 100,000*l.*; an expense obviously ruinous to any private person. The wealth of the national treasury was, in fact, employed to crush all liberal opponents. A more terrific tyranny is inconceivable.

By the time of the commencement of the great French Revolutionary war, the system of corruption was in full play. No deed, however disgraceful, was shrunk from that served the party in power, or enriched them as individuals. Laws and their penalties were set aside at the pleasure of almost any one in ministerial favour; for the aristocracy was now confident of having for ever rooted out the people from the constitution. Mr. Lambton, the father of Lord Durham, proved before parliament that one Hoskins had been got out of prison, where he lay for infringing the lottery act, on bail, by promising to procure sixty votes for Lord Hood, the ministerial candidate for Westminster: his bail was utterly worthless, but was accepted; and, of course, Hoskins disappeared. It appeared too, that one Smith, a publican in Westminster, who had been fined fifty pounds for violating the excise laws, had, for a similar promise to Lord Hood and the government, had his fine remitted. So freely did these daring ministers play fast and loose with the laws of the country.

"Everywhere bribery and corruption from all parties, and undue influences on the part of the government, were manifest; but it was in Scotland, the country of Rose and Dundas, that these latter influences were most openly practised."* From the moment of the union with Scotland, the greedy poverty of many nobles and others of that country had added alarmingly to the flood of corruption. In 1711, only four years after the union, it is declared that the Scottish peers, almost to a man, began to show an eager disposition to be bought by the ministry: nay, Lord Oxford declared in 1712, but five years after the union, that the Scotch lords were grown so extravagant in their demands, that *they were now come to expect a reward for every vote they gave*. It was urged by the patriotic that there was imminent danger to the constitution if the crown were allowed to crowd the House of Lords with Scottish peers, notoriously poor for the most part, and still more notoriously venal; that they, and whole hungry clans at their heels, had rushed into places, and the names of George Rose and Melville, the friends of Pitt, were become more prominent than all the others for the mass of shameless jobs by which they had covered themselves with affluence.

The means of self-aggrandisement were boundless, for the public money was suffered to lie in astounding sums in the hands of different ministers. The paymaster of the forces had seldom less

* Knight.

than a million in his hands; and Lord Holland, the father of Fox, had half-a-million in his hands when he died. How long he had it does not appear, but it was not received for fourteen years afterwards; and the interest, as *honest* George Rose said in parliament, which amounted to another half million, was never accounted for. Such was the state of things which lasted to and through the last great war, the wonderful expenditure of which we have already described.

But it is not to be supposed that this course of crime and extravagance had been run without remonstrance; that no voice had been raised in defence of the Constitution. For a hundred years, from the first motion of Mr. Bromley of Norwich, and and Sir John Aubyn, for reform, the demand for reform was continued at successive periods by such men as Carew, Glynne, Sawbridge, Fox, Saville, Sheridan, Lambton, Grey, Fitzgerald, Millbank, Russell, Tierney, Whitbread, Erskine, Cartwright, Smith of Norwich, Lord Durham, the Marquis of Bedford, Burdett, Brougham, Denman, Althorp, &c. &c., but in vain. During the headlong period of war and domestic despotism, the Scotch reformers, Muir, Margarott, Skirving, and Palmer were prosecuted, and transported; Mr. Winterbotham, an American minister, was imprisoned two years for preaching liberal sermons; Horne Tooke, Hardy, and Thelwall were committed to the Tower, but acquitted on their trial: Sir Francis Burdett shared a similar fate. In the course of the parliamentary struggle for the restoration of the representation, it was shown by Lord Grey, in the address of the Society of the "Friends of the People," that less than 15,000 electors returned the whole house, instead of the adult males of 30,000,000 of people; that the franchise was totally out of joint, Cornwall and Wiltshire returning more borough members than Yorkshire, Lancashire, Warwickshire, Middlesex, Worcestershire, and Somersetshire united; and that a single English county returned, within one, as many members as the whole of Scotland. That seventy members were returned by thirty-five places where there were no voters at all, except *hogs or owls* could be counted such; ninety others were returned by forty-six places, in none of which the voters exceeded fifty, and so on. Mr. Byng, in 1783, had shown that the Tower Hamlets paid 34,000*l.* land tax, and yet were unrepresented; that the county of Cornwall paid 20,000*l.* less, and yet was represented by forty-two members. Cornwall, in fact, was the stronghold of rotten boroughs. Nay, Pitt himself declared that "this was no representation, nor anything like it; but a party of men employed by ministers and foreigners, under the mask

and character of members of that house." He protested that "it was a cabal more to be dreaded than any other."*

But "this cabal more dangerous than any other" ruled on, and with Pitt himself at its head, for many years. It ruled on to the end of the great wars, and amply justified Pitt's declaration. Never did a cabal abuse to such an awful extent a great nation—never did any other heap on its native land such a mountain of debts, crimes, difficulties, and miseries in full store for coming years. That war ended, and the whole of Europe, reduced again by our arms and money to arbitrary subjection, there remained but one thing for our aristocratic government to attempt; and that was, to put out the last spark of freedom amongst us at home. They made that attempt, and failed. In 1818 the whole people of England were groaning under the intolerable results of their gigantic efforts to do that for France for which France did not thank them. Distress everywhere prevailed; riots were frequent, from the high price of food, and the stopping of the works in the manufacturing districts; the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended; Mr. Hunt was addressing vast crowds in Spitalfields and other places, to petition for reform; and a bill was soon passed to put down these meetings.

In 1819 distress and tyranny seemed to have reached their acme. There was to be no cry of distress; that last consolation of the wretched, the power to complain, was denied at the point of the bayonet; and, had the spirit of Englishmen *then* been one iota less than English, the triumph of the great scheme of aristocracy had been complete—the ruin of England had been consummated for ever, and all its long-earned glories laid in their grave. In vain would Alfred and Wycliffe, Milton and Marvel, Shakspeare and Bacon, Cromwell and Pym, Hampden and Fairfax, Newton and Locke, and all our radiant firmament of great souls and great names, have lived and acted for us. They would have become solitary stars in other hemispheres, lighting up other nations when that for which they fought and toiled was wrapped in actual darkness; and the Stuarts, Straffords, Lauds, and their like would have done their work, and have plunged us down into the herd of myriad slaves that vegetate on the face of the violated earth, not men, but the weeds which the armed heel of tyranny stamps into basest mire.

Castlereagh, Sidmouth, and Liverpool did their worst. The government was become thoroughly odious by its restrictions on the press, and on all constitutional freedom. By its employment of Oliver and other spies to excite the sufferers to riot, so that

* Parliamentary Debates, 1782.

they might be cut down by the soldiery, and furnish plausible reasons for fresh enactments of a tyrannous nature; by the Manchester massacre, and the persecution of the radicals all over the kingdom, amongst whom were Hone, Hunt, Cobbett, Sir Charles Wolseley and many others, most of whom were immured in different prisons, they brought the popular indignation to a crisis.

Here the boundary of aristocratic policy was overstepped. The system of burrowing and cajoling had been abandoned, the mask had been thrown off; tyranny had dropped its stratagems, and its hollow phrases of "glorious constitution! free people!" &c., and stood forth in that naked and hideous form in which Englishmen never yet tolerated it.

The popular wrath arose. The aristocratic despotism affrighted, shrunk back, and, under the guidance of the whigs, retreated in 1832 into the magic circle of the Reform Bill. This once more flattered the people with the *show* of a constitution, though it artfully withheld the substance. It gave enough to soothe the irritated nation, but not enough to allow it to escape from aristocratic tutelage. It relaxed the reins, but did not remove them. With an elective franchise of 600,000 for 30,000,000 of people, it gulled John Bull with the idea that it admitted him to his own house, while he had not even got his head into the lobby. Like clever necromancers, the whig aristocrats waved their magic word-wand "extinction of rotten boroughs! extension of the franchise to new towns!" and all the old delusions were revived; John Bull got a paper document called the Reform Bill, and fancied it the genuine title to his estate. Aristocracy resumed its ascendancy, and to this hour holds the nation in the most perfect vassalage, spite of its most vigorous efforts to get free.

CHAPTER XXI.

ENGLAND, WITH ALL ITS LANDS, LEGISLATURE, AND DEPENDENCIES,
THE POSSESSION OF THE ARISTOCRACY.

Thus we have traced the career of aristocracy in this country through all its tortuous course, from the entrance of the Conqueror in 1066 to the present moment—a period of 778 years. It is the most remarkable history of any corporate body of men in the world. Other bodies, such as priestly hierarchies, priestly sects,

the monks and knights, the Templars and others, have risen, exercised a vast influence, and have fallen again into poverty, annihilation, or decrepitude and mere partial life; but this body has sustained nearly eight hundred years of daring assumption of exclusive wealth, honour, and privileges, and that over the most freedom-loving people on the earth; and has established itself on their shoulders, as the most powerful and wealthy body of men since the foundation of the world. The aristocracy of Greece and Rome have nothing to show, in comparison with the splendour and dominion of ours. All other modern aristocracies have, as we shall take occasion to show, ruined their respective nations, and fallen with them, or have for their arrogance and effeminacy been reduced to insignificance or nothing. The British aristocracy, on the contrary, has only risen the higher from defeat, brighter from temporary eclipse, and more successful from the efforts of a great nation to take possession of its own power.

From the period of the Revolution of 1688, whence we claim the full possession of our constitution, we may be said to have lost it altogether. It became then the prey and the property of the most artful class of men, by the most artful and successful scheme ever devised. To the depth of that stratagem and policy by which the people were beguiled out of their constitution, that of the popish priesthood in the middle ages on the ignorant mass, or of the inquisition on the bodies and souls of Spain and Italy, were nothing. They had to deal with ignorant and slavish nations—our aristocracy with proud, active, liberty-loving ones; natures great and enlightened, but with the fatal weakness of being easily blinded by the reflex of its own splendour from the mirror of royalty and aristocracy—of being flattered to its own ruin.

The first epoch of English aristocracy saw it enrich itself by the monarch's bounty, but punished and reduced by the monarch's resentment of its assumptions. The second epoch saw it stand by the monarch, and fall with him. The third and last saw it with more than Ulyssean, with more than Machiavellian, with more than Loyolean cunning, draw an eternal warning from its past errors, assume the policy of HYPOCRISY, and our own eyes have beheld its consequent and UNPARALLELED TRIUMPH!

While lauding the people's glory, it has accomplished its disgrace; while bowing in mock deference to its sovereignty, it has stolen its birthright! It has impudently picked our pockets while it has laughed in our faces, and pretended to reverence and obey John Bull, while it has laid him on his back, and taken his cash at its leisure. At this hour, spite of the Reform Bill, which was to annihilate its aggressions, it stands the great trium-

phant Colossus of all property, all government, and all power in this country. If any one should ask me what the aristocracy possesses in this nation, I would ask him what it does not possess? THE ARISTOCRACY OF ENGLAND POSSESSES EVERYTHING IN ENGLAND.

We have traced its history, let us now trace its possessions. These are:—

1. THE CROWN.
2. THE STATE; WITH ALL ITS OFFICES, TAXES, AND PENSIONS.
3. THE ARMY AND NAVY.
4. THE CHURCH IN ENGLAND, WALES, IRELAND, AND THE COLONIES; WITH ALL ITS DIGNITIES AND LIVINGS.
5. THE CROWN LANDS AND NEARLY ALL THE LANDS OF ENGLAND.
6. THE PUBLIC CHARITIES.
7. IRELAND AND THE COLONIES; INDIA, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, THE WEST INDIES, THE CAPE, THE MAURITIUS, &c., &c.

This is a startling statement, and there will be those who are ready to protest against its accuracy. If we have not, however, already sufficiently proved that accuracy in the course of this volume, we will pledge ourselves to do it very speedily. If it be accurate, it is time that the whole nation started up, and with one voice demanded the restitution of its rights in the language which Lord Chatham used in the House of Lords in 1770:—

“The constitution has been grossly violated! the constitution at this moment stands violated! Until that wound be healed, until the grievances be redressed, it is in vain to recommend union to parliament; in vain to promote concord among the people. If we mean seriously to unite the nation within itself, we must convince them that their complaints are regarded, that their injuries shall be redressed. On that foundation I would take the lead in recommending peace and harmony to the people. On any other, I would never wish to see them united again. If the breach in the constitution be effectually repaired, the people will of themselves return to a state of tranquillity; if not, MAY DISCORD PREVAIL FOR EVER! I know to what point this doctrine and this language will appear directed, but I feel the principles of an Englishman, and I utter them without apprehension and reserve. The crisis is indeed alarming; so much the more does it require a prudent relaxation on the part of the government. If the king's servants will not permit a constitutional question to be decided according to the forms, and on the principles of the constitution, it must then be decided in some other manner; and rather than it should be given up; rather than the nation should surrender their birthright to a despotic minister, I hope my lords, old as I am, *I shall see the question brought to issue, and fairly tried between the people and the government!*”

That was the language of wisdom and patriotism in 1770, and it is the language of wisdom and patriotism now; and should nerve the nation not only to echo it, but to act upon it. But let us proceed with our great case. The crown, we assert, is in the power and possession of the aristocracy.

To say nothing of the plain historical fact, that the crown was usurped by the Tudors—a branch, and a very insignificant branch of the aristocracy in the 14th century, and remains with their descendants, and is therefore itself only a portion of this great and towering aristocracy of England—let any one tell us how the crown is to escape from the absolute rule and domination of the aristocracy. The crown lands are in their possession: they have thrown the crown as a pauper upon the country; in other words, they have made it dependent on the steady course of government and the dictum of parliament. That sounds well; but both houses of parliament are in the hands and entire guidance of the aristocracy; and if the crown made the least effort to free itself, it would find itself at once abandoned by the aristocratic ministers. Say that the ministers were the tories, as already remarked, the crown would exercise its right, and choose other ministers. But whence?—From the whigs. But the whigs are equally a section of the aristocracy, and as Lord Grey, when in office, confessed, as zealously determined as the tories, “*to stand by their order.*” Nobody knew the real nature of the aristocracy better than that shrewd observer of their own body, Horace Walpole; and he says—“The Lords are become so much more considerable than at the Revolution, that they are in no danger from the crown; and *when they do not fear it themselves*, they will always be ready to uphold it. They look on themselves as *distinct from the rest of the nation*; and, at best, leave the people to be taken care of by their representatives in the Commons. *As jealous of, and as fond of their privileges* as the king of his prerogative, *they are attentive to maintain them*, and deem *the rights of the people rather as encroachments, than as a common interest.*”

There is a mass of wisdom in this sentence; but we must only take from it this truth—that the aristocracy will support the crown so long as they do not fear it, and that they are still more jealous of the people than of it. Let the crown, as we have observed, make the smallest movement towards a freedom of action in opposition to the jealous privileges of the aristocracy, and the whole body will be in alarm. It may reject tories and take whigs, or reject whigs and take tories,—it will find the same resistance to movement in any line but that of aristocratic interest. Should the crown—a miracle not

occurring once in a thousand years—resolve to throw itself on the people, in order to wrest from the peers its own freedom, the whole machinery of government would be thrown into confusion, for the aristocracy wield the majority of the House of Commons. The danger were too great for the timid nerves of royalty, which, satisfied with its ample allowance, submits gracefully to its gilded thralldom. It is still, and must be, the golden ball, tossed from whig to tory, and from tory to whig, but never passing beyond the aristocratic circle into plebeian hands.

The aristocracy is then in possession of the crown, it is in possession of its estates and its patronage, as we shall presently show. It is in possession, by the same rule, of

THE STATE.

The two great sections of it are, one or the other, always in power and the possession of office. This is too plain to require further remark. If any one doubts this, let him, if a plebeian, attempt to get into office. He will find pretty soon, that for a high office, he has no chance, for a low one, he must sell his soul. Let him walk through the government offices of all kinds, and what will he see? Aristocrats, sons of aristocrats, and slaves and dependents of aristocrats.

True, when charged with this, nothing is more common than for the aristocracy to turn most triumphantly and say, "Where do we find all these aristocrats in offices?" Yes, truly, where do you find them? In the high and lucrative offices; in the offices that require little to do but to receive the salaries; in the sinecures and the pension list, and the good fat jobs. There is, of course, a large mob of workers who strike the eye, and pass for the favoured. But this mob of workers, this mob of the inferior mass of placemen, these infantry of the army of officials, are the slaves and the dependents, the actual work-tools of the more dignified class. Not a man of these, however insignificant, but is strictly scrutinized and tested, before he is admitted to his post. He is bound, body and soul, to the existing state of things. He must live by it, swear by it, and vote by it, and the aristocrats could no more do without this mob, than a general and his officers could do without the common million of legalised murderers. The true aristocracy, the genuine vulture breed are, as described of old by Jesus Christ, "they cannot dig, and to beg they are ashamed;" they must therefore have their subalterns to do the fag for them, and all these inferiors that strike the eye in offices, &c. are but the stones of the foundation on which the Corinthian fabric of aristocracy is raised: they are the myrmidons and janissaries of the aristocratic power. But to come

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to the real test of the matter—Who receive, handle, and deal out the taxes? The aristocrats. Who the pensions? Turn to the pension list, and whom do you find? Addingtons, Ardens, Althorps, Amhersts, Angleseys or Pagets, Arbuthnots, Argyles, Aucklands, Athlones, Aylmers, Bagots, Bathursts by half dozens, Barings, Barringtons, Beauclerks, Berresfords, Bentincks, Bexleys, Bloomfields, Bouveries, Broughams, Camdens, Campbells sixteen in a row, Cannings, Cathcarts, Cockburns, Conyngnams, Crokers, Devonshires, Dundases, Eldons, Ellenboroughs, Erskines, Errols, Fanes, Fitzclarences, Foxes, Freres, Gordons a whole clan, Goulburns, Grahames, Grenvilles, Grants another clan, Greys, Hamiltons, Hays, Herries, Hills, Howards, Lansdownes, Lyndhursts, Manners, Mansfields, Murrays a clan, Pagets, Peels, Percevals, Percies, Richmonds, Rodneys, Roses and Rosses a regiment, Russells, Seymours, Scotts, Shaftesburys, Sinclairs a clan, Smiths a whole rabble (for even the Smiths have got ennobled), Somersets, Spottiswoods, Henleys, Stanhopes, Stewarts, Talbots, Thurlowes, Vernons, Villiers, Walpoles, Wellingtons, Winchesters, Wyndhams, Wynns, &c. &c. These fill out a gigantic list of 895,000*l.* a-year, to which we shall come presently, with their various sums of from 35,000*l.* to a poor 50*l.* a-year.

If the history of this list—the *services and merits* for which these sums of the people's money were granted—could be fairly and fully written by some Asmodeus who had been behind the scenes, it would make the most awful chronicle of crime, public and private, villany and leprosy of soul, that ever existed. It would make Satan "grin horribly" from ear to ear, and an honest Englishman hide his head for shame.

Again we ask, Who are they that received this mountainous pile of 895,000*l.* a-year from this much-enduring nation? Who draw it from the hard-earned gains even of the very poorest, except those who are actually in work-houses, and the payment of which, indeed, has contributed to bring thousands of them into those houses, nay, out of whose daily doled and weighed-out portion of bread, these aristocratic locusts do actually still draw their modicum of taxation and pension? Who are they? Let it not be hinted, let it not be whispered, but let it be shouted from mountain to mountain, and city to city, from the palace to the workhouse, from the bonded corn warehouse where the aristocratic lock is put on a nation's food, to the hovel where the poor hind who has tilled the ground and raised the crop lies dying of starvation, amid his starving wife and children. Let it be shouted with the lungs of a people's righteous indignation—Who are they? Are they the great and deserving? those who have rendered real and eminent services to the country?

who have made scientific or other discoveries? who have alleviated the diseases and the sufferings of the people? who have spent their lives in establishing beneficial institutions, or in writing and thinking, in order to root out crime, barbarism, vice, oppression, and every evil that pursues human nature? Are they the poets, the patriots, the scientific enrichers of the community? No! These form just so insignificant and almost invisible a portion of the great list of pensions, as serves to indicate what aristocracy thinks of such men, and how it would reward them. Since the accession of Queen Victoria, public opinion has compelled the passing of an Act to restrain in some degree the lavish and shameless grant of pensions. There are 66,379*l.* a-year of those pensions fixed on the civil list, and her Majesty is restrained from granting more than 2000*l.* yearly in pensions. So much impression has public feeling made on the callous moral sense of parliament as to compel *some little* attention to literary and scientific merits. But of this 895,000*l.* which is abstracted from the taxation in the shape of pensions, the amount to scientific and literary persons is professed to be about 9000*l.* but is really only about 4000*l.*

PENSIONS CONNECTED WITH LITERARY OR SCIENTIFIC EMINENCE, AND WITH USEFUL INVENTIONS AND ATTAINMENTS IN THE ARTS.

Airey, Richarda	£300	Brought forward	£3,007
Banim, John	150	Halifax, six sisters	238
Beaufort, Louisa Catherine	81	Ivory, James	300
Bisset, Mary	100	Jamieson, John	100
Blair, Ann	49	Kirwan, Wilhelmina and Marian	266
Brewster, Sir David	297	Lander, Harriet and Harriet Ann	120
Brown, Ann Elizabeth	97	Lloyd, Mary Harriet	200
Brown, Jane	58	M'Crie, Mary	100
Campbell, Thomas	184	M'Farlane, Margaret	97
Cort, Caroline and Catherine	38	Mackenzie, Hope and Helen	97
Crowe, Eyre Evans	100	Maturin, Harriet	43
Cullen, Rebecca	97	Millingen, James	100
Cumberland, Lady Albinia, and Gordon, A. Elizabeth	393	Mitford, Mary Russell	100
Dalton, John	300	Montgomery, James	150
Dalzell, Mary	49	Moore, Thomas	300
Dickson, Jane, Caroline Elizabeth, and Sarah Louisa	507	Mudge, Thomas	100
Duncan, Wilhelmina	39	Nash, Mary	100
Drysdale, Martha	49	O'Keefe, Adelaide	50
Gilholly, Maria	21	Osceley, Sir William	100
Grant, Ann	98	Outram, Mary	97
		Page, four sisters	240

Carried forward £3,007

Carried forward £5,955

Brought forward . £5,955		Brought forward , £7,972	
Paley, family of	200	Stewart, Maria D'Arcy	200
Pond, Ann Gordon	200	Taylor, Marion	49
Pye, Martha	60	Thomson, Jane	150
Robinson, Rachael	184	Thorpe, Benjamin	160
Russell, Eleanora, two daughters of	64	Turner, Sharon	200
Smith, William	100	Usher, three sisters	95
Somerville, Mary	300	Whitelaw, Eleanor	177
Somerville, three sisters	97	Wilde, John	138
South, Sir James	300	Wren, Constantia Maria	61
Southey, Robert	455	Young, Ann	445
Spray, Mary	57	Young, three sisters	27
		In all about 81 persons.	
Carried forward . £7,972		£9,674	

This is from the last full Report of Pensions in 1838, that of 1844 including none under 1000*l.* a-year. Since then some of the really eminent persons of this list are dead, as Southey, Dalton, Campbell, &c., whose places have been supplied by others equally deserving, as Wordsworth, Hood's widow, Tennyson, &c., so that we may suppose that the amount is pretty nearly the same as it was. This, at the first appearance, seems *something*; but the moment we begin to analyse it, we are amazed to see what is actually the real amount paid to real fame and character, and how many mere state paupers have been quartered on this department of the Pension List, of the items of which literary and scientific magnates are supposed to be the recipients.

On going over the list, we believe those most conversant with literature and science, and their true heroes, will be sorely puzzled to find above a dozen real names of distinction; the amount of whose pensions does not exceed 4000*l.* What then are the rest? There are numbers of the daughters, granddaughters, and nieces of Scotch, Irish, and English professors, and schoolmasters, as the Browns, Dalzells, Duncans, Stewarts, Gilholys, Whitelaws, Lloyds, &c. Others are connexions of the bishops, and others who have held a plurality of lucrative posts, and done no more than any other bishop or schoolmaster all over the country, for science or literature. If the widow of Dr. Lloyd, who held three pieces of preferment, is to be pensioned at the rate of 200*l.* a-year, and her daughter after her, because her husband was preacher at Lincoln's Inn, Regius Professor of divinity at Oxford, mathematical tutor and lecturer at Christchurch, and finally Bishop of Oxford, why not all the widows of all the other pluralists? If the six daughters of Dr. Halifax, tutor of Trinity

College, and then Bishop of Gloucester, should have 288*l.* a-year, because George III. translated him to the see of St. Asaph, and he did not *live long enough to recover the expenses of his translation*, why not all the daughters of all bishops, who do not live to recover the expenses of their translations? How many eminent literary men would be glad to *recover the expenses of their translations*, but neither do, nor lay hold of a pound in the shape of a pension? If Ann Young is to have 445*l.*, and her daughter after her, because her husband was—not Young the poet, but a bishop of Clonfert, why not all other bishops' widows and daughters be pensioned, and that not out of the general, but out of the literary list?

The whole literary and scientific list is loaded with gross impositions on the public, while many men of real merit are left to the charity of the Literary Fund Association.

Another thing regarding pensions is very delusive to the public eye. The whole amount of what is expressly called the Pension List is but 139,427*l.*, of which 66,379*l.* is paid out of the Civil List; 57,264*l.* out of the Consolidated Fund; and 15,784*l.* out of the 4½ per cent. duties. Where, then, is the 895,000*l.* that we speak of? That, with the exception of these sums, is mixed up with, and paid out of the enormous mass of general taxation, in such pretty lumps, as, to the Duke of Wellington, besides all his other grants, places, and salaries, 4000*l.* a-year; the Duke of Grafton 14,472*l.*, out of the Post-office, Excise, and Queen's Bench; and so on, as will be seen at large, as we proceed.

The bulk, then, of our public pensioners, who are they? In the first place, they are the holders of sinecure offices, as judges, and the law-court offices, and of offices of all kinds, however absurd and useless, and which ought, years ago, to have been abolished, and which would have been so had the people conducted their own affairs, but which the aristocracy have actually settled and entailed on their friends and dependents to the annual amount of 358,000*l.* Next is a large class of men who have filled offices, many of them to the manifest mischief and enslavement of their country; and these men were not only paid for this in large salaries of four and five thousand a-year, nay, of ten and fifteen thousand, but got retiring pensions of nearly as much. We will take some samples of these from the pension returns, from January, 1842, to January, 1843, as called for by Mr. Williams, the member for Coventry, and ordered to be printed June, 1844. This return, be it remarked, includes only such as exceed 1,000*l.* per annum, and thus hides a mass of infamous pensions, especially to women. It may also be remarked that a great mass of infamous pensioners have died

off since the close of the war, by which the country is relieved from some of the most disgraceful payments ever made. For instance, we are happy not to find in this return—

Lords H. J. and R. J. Conway, late prothonotaries of the Court of King's Bench, Ireland	£2,137	0	0
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We are also glad to miss the following item of the former return :—

W. H. J. Scott, son of Lord Eldon, reversion of the Rev. T. Thurlow's annuity. This annuity was a <i>compensation for useless offices</i> abolished in the Court of Chancery	£11,000	0	0
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Old Lord Eldon managed this job for his son. As the old man is gone to his account, and the young man also, the grandson having succeeded to the title, these compensations are, it is to be hoped, extinct too, though the officer in the Court of Chancery not only receives a fine salary for his present services, but also a compensation for the *loss of sinecure abuses* abolished in the reign of William IV. Thus :—

Joseph Collier, Registrar of the Court of Chancery, salary	£1,800	0	0
Compensation under 3 and 4 Will. IV.	1,100	0	0
Edward Dod Colville, another Registrar, salary	2,000	0	0
Compensation under the same act	1,100	0	0

And so on with all the officers of the court. So that it appears we may abolish abuses, if we can, but not the salaries for them. Nay, though, as we observe, the country is relieved by death from many disgraceful pensioners, it has got still as many, and probably even *more* disgraceful, for the Pension List is undiminished in *amount*. This demands instant and earnest inquiry, for on this head the return of 1844 leaves us in ominous darkness.

From the government office pensions we may take a few :—

Abergavenny, Earl of, compensation allowance for loss of the office of Inspector of Prosecutions in the Customs	£1,545	0	0
Amberst, Earl of, pension on Consolidated Fund	3,000	0	0
Auckland, Lord, ditto ditto	2,000	0	0
Bexley, Lord, old Vansittart, ditto	3,000	0	0
Burke, Edmund, representatives of, pension on Consolidated Fund	1,340	0	0

This pension which has luckily at length expired with the late Earl Spencer, may be said to have been granted for Burke running us into the French revolutionary war, at a cost of three thousand millions.

Beresford, J. C., compensation for loss of office of Joint Storekeeper in the Irish Customs	£	s.	d.
Burrard, Rev. G., compensation for loss of office of Searcher, Customs	4,315	7	8
Bullock, E. C., late Chief Clerk in the Treasury	1,100	0	0
Bates, Edward, late Secretary of Taxes	1,200	0	0
Bidwell, Thomas, late Chief Clerk, Foreign Office	1,370	0	0
Buller, J., late Commissioner of Customs	1,396	0	0
	1,100	0	0

And whole columns of such people who were well paid for doing little, and are now paid for doing nothing. We leave them, and notice only a few particular cases.

Cowper, Earl of, hereditary pension for his ancestor marrying the heiress of General Auverkerque of King William's time	1,600	0	0
Colchester, Lord, hereditary pension for services of his father, who held sinecures, and was censured by parliament for such services	3,000	0	0
Canning, Viscount, pension on account of his father, a Tory trimmer	3,000	0	0
Carr, Hon. Jane, on Consolidated Fund	2,000	0	0
Croker, Right Hon. John Wilson, a placeman who has held the most profitable offices	1,500	0	0
Ellis, Right Hon. H., Consolidated Fund	1,400	0	0
Fagel, Baron ditto	1,026	0	0
Fullarton, John and Garth T., moiety of Earl of Bath's hereditary pension: the chief services of Bath, better known as the Whig Pulteney, were helping to pass the Septennial Act, and giving up patriotism for place and title	1,200	0	0
Grafton, Duke of, hereditary pension out of the Excise Revenue £7,200	10,584	0	0
Ditto Post-office 3,384			

This is one of the incumbrances fixed by Charles II. on the country for his bastards. But what right had he or any king to compel all posterity to pay for the consequences of his debaucheries? This ought to be abolished.

Glenelg, Lord, on Consolidated Fund: a well-disposed, quiet old fellow enough; (but what services did he ever render to this country to the value of, yearly)	2,000	0	0
Gifford, Lord, a lawyer	1,202	0	0
Grady, H. Deane, <i>once</i> counsel to the Board of Irish Excise, for which he was well paid	1,333	6	8
Harrison, J., compensation for loss of office of Post-Master, Dublin	1,207	0	0
Herricks, Right Hon. J. C., ditto, as Commissary in Chief	1,350	0	0
Hobhouse, J. C., late Secretary of State	1,000	0	0

		£	s.	d.
Lushington, Rt. Hon. S. R., on Consolidated Fund :—(for what?)		1,500	0	0
Manchester, Duke of, loss of office as Collector of Customs, outwards, held by the <i>late</i> Duke		2,928	7	4
Mecklenburgh Strelitz, Prince of, on Consolidated Fund of Ireland. (What good did this foreigner ever do us? He would be much overpaid with the odd 4s. 4d.)		1,788	4	4
Marlborough, Duke of, hereditary pension out of Post-Office revenue		4,000	0	0
Mayo, Earl of, Pension as Chairman of the Committees of the <i>once</i> Irish House of Lords		1,290	11	8
M'Clintock, John, compensation for loss of offices in the Irish House of Commons		2,450	4	8
Penn, Granville, on Consolidated Fund		4,000	0	0
Planta, Right Hon. Joseph, ditto		1,500	0	0
Perceval, Spencer, ditto		2,700	0	0
Price, N., as <i>late</i> compiler of the Dublin Gazette		1,590	0	0
Schomberg, heir of the Duke of, another of King William's favourites, out of Post-Office revenue		2,880	0	0
Seymour, Lord G., as <i>late</i> Chairman to Board of Excise		1,500	0	0
Seymour, Lord Henry, compensation for loss of office of <i>Craner and Wharfinger of Port of Dublin</i>		1,251	11	8
Trotter, J., as <i>late</i> Storekeeper General		1,100	0	0
Wilson, G., as <i>late</i> Commissioner of Customs		1,050	0	0
Willmot, T., as <i>late</i> Collector of ditto		1,760	0	0
Wellington, Duke of, pension £4,000. With pay and other sinecure offices		8,916	16	3

This is pretty well! But this, as we have observed, is but a mere sample; the whole list of such things makes a book, the most extraordinary book in the world. There is no instance in the history of the earth of a nation, there never will be another, which has suffered the vultures of aristocracy to fix themselves so openly, audaciously, and relentlessly upon it, pricking its flesh to the very bone. John Bull fat! He ought to be drawn as a living skeleton, with a thousand hungry cormorants hovering over his devoted head. If one could laugh at anything so serious, we certainly should do it at the barefaced impudence with which this race of cormorants has quartered itself on John, and at the idiotic unconsciousness with which he has allowed them to feast on, and drink his very life's blood. Their robbery they have formed into a *system*; and then have coolly declared it a right—a "*vested right*;"—that name for the foulest of all wrongs, a wrong so shameless, that if a man claim "*a vested right*," he ought at once to be hanged up without judge or jury as a traitor to his country.

Their *system* is a perfect network of impositions, a ramification of robbery that extends in every possible direction, even

into the future. Thus, according to the aristocratic doctrine, the country is—like the church to the clergy,—their milch cow, which is to suckle all their brood to the tenth generation. It is established by them as a good and rational rule, that if a man once is lucky enough to obtain a favour from government, that favour turns employment into a right, and can never more be abrogated. Thus, give a man—an aristocratic man, of course, an office, and though he fill that office but a year, and during that time fill it with doing nothing, yet if he be dismissed, he shall still and for ever *retain his salary*, by way of pension! The preceding list is a whole string of such cases. Thus the brood of aristocrats is all provided for; the country suffers, but they flourish. Every change of ministry sweeps the tory or the whig troop out of office, but what then?—They all walk off with their *retiring* pensions, allowances, compensations, and the country has to pay the new set which comes in, salaries also. These again, on the first change, go out, and have their pensions, and another set comes in, and has salaries. And so the great kitchen spit of honest John goes round, and every one gets a “cut and a come again.” By this means the country is actually smothered under heaps of pensioned servants. It pays not merely for people to do the business of the government, and that itself at an enormous rate; but it pays for ten times the number who do nothing, for the sage reason, that it has had the ill-luck *once to employ them!*

If in private life every man who hired a servant was compelled to pension and maintain that servant for life, we should soon determine to do our work ourselves. But this is the wise practice of England, fixed on it by its aristocracy, and patiently submitted to. We may look round the world in vain for anything like it. All other countries think it quite enough to pay for services done, and fifty per cent. less than we do. But we are not content even to pay our own countrymen in this mad fashion; we actually call in foreigners of all nations, and throw our money to them. We pay to Americans, French, Corsicans, Dutch, Spaniards, and Germans. We pay to the Corsicans, and French of Toulon, who received damage by our exploits there in the great war: to Spanish refugees who were obliged to quit their country for their opposition to one or other party. In our pension list of 1832 stand these items, we know not how far death has reduced them these dozen years.

Pensions to American loyalists	£5,056
” Toulouse and Corsican emigrants	14,038
” St. Domingo sufferers and Dutch ruined officers	1,820
” Spanish refugees who had co-operated with the British armies in the Peninsular war	18,000

We lost America, and pensioned such of the Americans as helped us to lose it. Did the Americans pension such English as helped them to win it from us? William Penn was an excellent man, and planted a fine colony in America, but that is no reason that we should maintain his descendants for ever. That is rather an affair for the United States. Yet on our pension list we find

Granville Penn, hereditary pension on Consolidated Fund £4,000

This is stated to be for loss of territorial rights in Pennsylvania, consequent on the separation of the American colonies from England.

What! did *we* take away these territorial rights? No! The Americans took them away, and to the Americans those Penns should have looked for compensation. But they knew that they might look long enough in that quarter; they knew the foolishness of John Bull, and they came hither. But we ask again, Why should *we* pay them for ever for the Americans taking away *our* territories? William Penn made a bargain with us for Pennsylvania. If it turned out a *bad* bargain, that was his concern, and not ours. But it was a good bargain; and had his children chosen to live in America as American citizens, they would have lost nothing. But they chose to put themselves in opposition to their country, and they naturally lost their property in it. *We* lost all our property there, and were weak enough to pay them for losing theirs too.

But this is only one feature of this barefaced list of impositions. It appears that if we do a man the favour to appoint him an ambassador to a foreign court, be it the most petty court on the continent, he not only receives for the time his four, five, or even ten thousand per annum, as to France, and eleven thousand, as to Russia—a very good thing indeed! a capital thing!—but he expects on his return to be pensioned for life at the rate of two, three, or four thousand a-year. The list quoted furnishes numbers of such cases. We have pensions to former ambassadors to the little courts of Stuttgart and the Swiss Cantons. We are paying no less than four persons for having been ambassadors to the Ottoman Porte, each from 1,056*l.* to 2,056*l.* a-year, besides the salary of the man now there, Sir Stratford Canning, 7,000*l.* a-year; so that our ambassadorial relations with such a state as Turkey cost us from twenty to thirty thousand a-year! Our charges for ambassadors and consuls are yearly from three to four hundred thousand pounds; of which *fifty thousand* alone is for *retired* salaries.

But it may be as well to look a little closer at these ambassadorships. In Paris we have Lord Cowley with 9,836*l.* a-year; and besides, Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer, as secretary of embassy, acting, it is stated, as minister plenipotentiary, with a salary of 1,024*l.* Now, if Mr. Bulwer can act as minister plenipotentiary with 1,024*l.* a-year, what need of Lord Cowley with nearly 10,000*l.* At Petersburg our ambassador has 9,102*l.*, and an envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary 1,864*l.* At the little state of Turin our ambassador costs us 4,100*l.* a-year; at the still more insignificant Hanover, 2,872*l.*; at Constantinople, 7,000*l.*, with a consul-general, 2,257*l.*; at the Hague, 4,000*l.*; at Munich, 3,689*l.*; at Washington, 5,000*l.*; at Vienna, 9,900*l.*; at Rio de Janeiro, 4,500*l.*; at Lisbon, 4,400*l.*; at Buenos Ayres, 3,300*l.*; at Mexico, 4,000*l.*; at Brussels, 3,850*l.*; at Naples, 4,400*l.*; at Copenhagen, 3,426*l.*; &c., &c., &c. Now, one would think these men pretty well paid, yet see here the pretty little list of those that we still pay for, having once employed them—

PENSIONS.

Adair, Right Hon. Sir Robert, <i>late</i> Ambassador to the Ottoman Porte	2056
Arbuthnot, Right Hon. C. " ditto ditto	2056
Frere, B. " ditto ditto	1006
Ponsonby, Viscount " ditto ditto	1700
Beauvale, Lord, brother of } " ditto Vienna	1700
Lord Melbourne	
Cathart, Earl " ditto Petersburg	1786
Heytesbury, Lord " ditto ditto	1700
Strangford, Viscount " ditto ditto	2056
Cockburn, A. " ditto Wirtemberg	1516
Chad, G. W. " ditto Prussia	1800
Frere, Right Hon. J. H. " ditto Spain	1516

This man, just now deceased, in Spain neglected his duties so grossly, and gave such unguarded intelligence to the enemy, as more than all besides contributed to the overthrow of Sir John Moore and his army.

Foster, Right Hon. Sir A. J., <i>late</i> Ambassador to Turin	1300
Gambler, Sir James " ditto Netherlands	1200
Hammond, G. " ditto United States	1006
Hervey, L. " ditto Madrid	1006
Morier, J. P. " ditto Saxony	1516
Ouseley, Right Hon. Sir Gore " ditto Persia	1786
Pierrepoint, Right Hon. H. M. " ditto Stockholm	1006
Smith, J. T. " ditto Stuttgart	1006
Taylor, Right Hon. Sir B. " ditto Prussia	1336
Thornton, Right Hon. Sir E. " ditto Portugal	1786
Vaughan, Right Hon. Sir C. R. " ditto Washington	1300

Thus, for ex-ambassadors, per year . . . £34,048

Next, we have accomplished a union with Ireland that O'Connell is moving heaven and earth to get repealed, and at what price? Besides paying a million and a half to compensate

refractory members of the Irish parliament, for the loss of boroughs, with compensations for loss of office to the amount of 89,245*l.* Thus we have abolished the Irish government, and pay not only for its new and present English government, but also for its old one.

Again, if our king marry a foreign princess, as he is bound to do, we receive with her a magnificent *O.* If any of our princesses marry a foreign prince, we must give them a goodly dower, and pension them into the bargain, as the late Duchess of Hesse Homberg—1,000*l.* a-year. Nay, we maintain foreign kings, as the King of Hanover, with his 20,000*l.* a-year. Then to William III.'s Dutch favourites we still pay, besides the enormous estates they got,—

To the Earl of Athlone—Ginckel . . .	£2,843	per annum.
” Descendants of Marshal Schomberg . .	2,880	do.
” Earl Cowper, descendant from the General Overkerken by marriage with the heiress	1,600	do.
	£7,323	do.

But finally, the bulk of the swarm of pensioners which we support, what are they? One class of incumbrances are royal bastards and favourites. Of the former, we have of the licentious Charles II.'s bastards, four settled upon us as dukes—St. Albans, Grafton, Richmond, and Buccleugh; and besides the large estates given to them by their grand Turk of a father, and duties on coals, which the city of London has had to purchase from Richmond, we have still to pay to St. Albans, as Grand Falconer of England—a *most useful office!*—1,372*l.* a-year; and as hereditary Registrar of the Court of Chancery, 640*l.*; together 2,012*l.* And to Grafton—

Out of the Excise, yearly	£7,200
” Post-Office	3,384
” King's Bench, as hereditary sealer . .	2,888
	£14,472 !!

The Excise and the Post-Office are burdened in a remarkable manner with pensions, and some of them of a most objectionable nature.

FEES OUT OF THE EXCISE REVENUE.

The Duke of Grafton	£7,200
Earl Cowper	1,600
Carried forward	£8,800

FEES OUT OF POST-OFFICE REVENUE—continued.

Brought forward . . .	£8,800
Duke of Grafton . . .	3,384
Fullerton, J. and Garth, T. . .	1,200
Duke of Marlborough . . .	4,000
Duke of Schomberg, heirs of . .	2,880 — 11,464
	£20,264

Why should every person who sends a letter or pays for an exciseable article be compelled to pay for Charles II.'s debauchery and adultery? Is it not enough that we all have still to pay for the Duke of Marlborough's nullified victories, and King William's Dutch favourites?

Next comes an aristocratic crowd of people of the class known in ancient times, as *Fruges consumere nati*; and in modern times and language—

As born,
Merely to eat up the corn.

They are a pack of what the Scotch term "Thiggers and sorners," whom their own relations will at any rate get rid of, and hang on the all-capacious shoulders of John Bull. Besides that these noble lords and ladies are in possession of enormous salaries for office, and for offices, often three or four, and a pension to boot, they have brought in and quartered on the country every poor relation they could. It was said that the Fox and Addington administration of 1806, or "All the Talents," was just as eager after emolument as any other; so it was just as apparent to the country that the Whigs, after the Reform Bill, were as totally *unreformed* in this particular as any of their predecessors; came with perfect hunter appetites to the long withheld feast, and covered themselves, and families and friends, as thickly with the public spoil.

The Scotch stand pre-eminently on the pension list. They kicked hard against the Union, but it has proved a blessed Union to them. They have come down from their mountains in whole regiments upon us. We have Campbells, *sixteen in a row*, with pensions from 184*l.* to 3,000*l.* We have Cockburns, *eight in a row*, five of them women, with pensions from 100*l.* to 680*l.* each. We have Erskines, *six in a row*, four of them women, with pensions from 300*l.* to 400*l.* each. We have Grants, *eleven in a row*; Hamiltons, *ten*; Macs, of different kinds, *two dozen*; Murrays, *nine*; amongst them a good sprinkling of honorable Deborahs and Lady Charlottes; Roses and Rosses and Rothes, *a dozen*; Sinclairs, *six*, four of them women. The Scots, in fact, have insinuated themselves into every part and post of our

empire. Army, navy, government offices, colonies abroad, and literature at home. Almost every Review and Magazine and Journal is in their hands, from the Quarterly to the Literary Gazette; and the great mass, not only of the periodical matter but of booksellers' compilations, is done by Scotchmen. Do we blame them for this? Quite the contrary. They are perfectly right to take good care of themselves; and, what is still more honorable to them, *they care for one another*.

If two Englishmen were climbing a ladder, on a precipice, to attain some common object on the height above, the one that was first, and saw the other coming, would give him a kick, and bid him go to the devil. If two Scotchmen were in the same situation? Instead of a kick with the foot, the upper one would put down his hand and say—"Here's a haund, Sandy, we maun ane help the ither as weel's we can." There is a great national lesson in this trait. We say, well done, Scots; help one another all you can, but then—what are we that do not even take care of *ourselves*?

The last, and one of the worst class of pensioners, is that of the *mistresses* of ministers and placemen. The public is made to maintain not only the *royal*, but the *noble* prostitutes. We could point out particular instances of this kind, but they are too well known to need it. We will only add that, while a certain Mrs. Arbuthnot had her 938*l.* a-year from this moral country, if we find a particularly miserable pittance on the list, we look, and lo! it is sure to be that of a literary man. The Poet Campbell had 184*l.*, the widow of the celebrated Maturin, 46*l.*! Forty-six pounds a-year for a distinguished literary man's widow, and 938*l.* for a nobleman's concubine, and an adulteress into the bargain! Mark, O Englishmen! that is the estimate of literature by your aristocracy! The premier's wife gave some time ago 20*l.* a-year to Miss Frances Browne, a meritorious blind young poetess. This, we are told, is the surplus of a certain fund, the *surplus* of which is at the disposal of the premier's lady, and a great flourish of trumpets has been made by some of our literary journals and newspapers over this *generous* act. For myself I should like, before joining in this jubilee, to know *what* was the *amount* of the *fund* of which this was the *surplus*, and *who* were the *people* who got the *substance* of this fund? Moreover, I should like to know *to what aristocrat* Lady Peel *dare* to have offered this 20*l.* a-year; or whether even to her own butler? There was but one possible recipient for *any such sum*, and that was that wretched animal, a *poor poet or poetess*.

Is it not a disgrace to this nation that, after thirty years of peace, the outrageous list of war pensions, of Castlereagh and

Sidmouth pensions, should still stand unquestioned? That the enormous sum of 895,000*l.* a-year should still be given away, to heaven knows who? That an insolent aristocracy should still preserve the distribution of this monstrous sum is a perfect mystery, and should dare to make a merit of giving 20*l.* a-year to a *blind poetess*, while they give away from *blind John Bull* 895,000*l.* to their own kith and kin, and account for nothing less than thousands? Is it not still more extraordinary that literary men have so far forgot themselves as to laud this conduct?

But we have sufficiently demonstrated that the Pension List is the property of the aristocracy. It is the same with

THE OFFICES OF GOVERNMENT.

When we look at the salaries and emoluments of these offices, we need not ask who fixed the rate of payment.

	£	s.	d.
Lord Chancellor, salary 10,000 <i>l.</i> ; Speakership of House of Lords, &c., 5,000 <i>l.</i>	15,000	0	0
Principal Secretary to ditto	2,000	0	0
Vice-Chancellor	6,000	0	0
Chief Justice of Court of Queen's Bench	8,000	0	0
Chief Clerk of ditto ditto	9,625	0	0
Clerk of ditto ditto	5,172	0	0
Puisne Judges of ditto, each	5,000	0	0
Chief Justice of Common Pleas	8,000	0	0
Puisne Judges of ditto, each	5,000	0	0
Lord Chancellor of Ireland	8,000	0	0
First Lord of the Admiralty	4,500	0	0
Secretary to ditto	2,000	0	0
Solicitor of ditto	1,600	0	0
Judge of High Court of ditto	4,000	0	0
First Lord of the Treasury	5,000	0	0
Commissioner of ditto	1,200	0	0
Auditor of Civil List in ditto	1,200	0	0
Assistant Secretary ditto	2,000	0	0
Lord Justice Clerk and President of the Second Division of the Court of Sessions, Scotland	4,500	0	0
Chief Justice, Court of Common Pleas, Ireland	4,612	0	0
Second ditto ditto ditto	3,638	0	0
Third and fourth ditto ditto ditto, each	3,638	0	0
Chief Justice of Queen's Bench, Ireland	5,074	0	0
Prothonotary to ditto ditto	1,411	0	0
Second Justice ditto ditto	3,725	0	0
Third and fourth ditto ditto ditto, each	3,638	0	0
Chief Baron, Court of Exchequer, Ireland	4,612	0	0
Second, third, and fourth ditto ditto, each	3,638	0	0

THE OFFICES OF GOVERNMENT— <i>continued.</i>			£	s.	d.
Chief Remembrancer, Exchequer, Ireland	.	.	2,769	0	0
Second ditto ditto ditto	.	.	2,000	0	0
Judge of Prerogative Court, Ireland	.	.	3,000	0	0
Judge of Bankrupts' Court	.	.	2,000	0	0
Chancellor of the Exchequer	.	.	5,000	0	0
Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer	.	.	7,000	0	0
One of the Barons of the Court of Exchequer	.	.	5,000	0	0
Vice-Chancellor of ditto	.	.	5,000	0	0
Lords of Session in Scotland, each	.	.	3,000	0	0
Master of the Rolls	.	.	7,000	0	0
Ditto ditto, Ireland	.	.	3,964	0	0
Master in Chancery	.	.	2,500	0	0
Master of Report Office in ditto	.	.	4,589	0	0
Lord Justice-General and President of the Court of Session, Scotland	.	.	4,800	0	0
Speaker of the House of Commons, besides a house	.	.	5,000	0	0
Serjeant-at-arms in ditto	.	.	1,500	0	0
Ditto ditto in the Lords	.	.	3,400	0	0
Clerk of the House of Commons	.	.	3,500	0	0
Second ditto	.	.	2,500	0	0
Governor-General of Bengal	.	.	25,000	0	0
" Canada, &c.	.	.	7,000	0	0
Governor of Ceylon	.	.	8,500	0	0
" Gibraltar	.	.	4,000	0	0
Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland	.	.	20,000	0	0
Secretary of State	.	.	5,000	0	0
Under Secretary of State	.	.	1,500	0	0
Secretary of State, Home Department	.	.	5,000	0	0
Under ditto ditto	.	.	2,000	0	0
Ditto ditto, Colonial ditto	.	.	1,500	0	0
Secretary of State, Colonial Office	.	.	5,000	0	0
Paymaster of the Forces	.	.	2,000	0	0
Etc. &c.	.	.			

We take these again as a sample of the scale of public official remuneration.

The legal gentlemen having been paid according to the above fine rate while *in* office, present us also with the following pretty list of their pensions on quitting them. These are from the last return of 1844. It is well worth while to notice the pensions of these tongue-warriors, because when we turn to the naval and military services, we find that their pensions even for wounds, seldom exceed two or three hundreds a-year. The Duke of Wellington and one or two names are anomalies. But as for these lawyers, they are not satisfied with less than two, three, nay four or five thousands a-year. What wounds did Lord Brougham get on the woollack worth £5000 per annum to this country?

LEGAL PENSIONS.

	£	s.	d.
Alexander, Sir William, late Chief Baron of the Exchequer	2,812	10	0
Avonmore, Viscount, late Principal Registrar, Court of Chancery, Ireland	4,199	19	0
Adlington, Thomas, late Side Clerk of the Court of Exchequer	1,160	7	8
Brougham and Vaux, late Lord Chancellor of England	5,000	0	0
Bushe, Right Hon. C. K., late Chief Justice, Court of Queen's Bench, Ireland	3,507	13	10
Cottenham, Lord, late Lord Chancellor of England	5,000	0	0
Cross, Francis, late retired Master of the Court of Chancery, Chilton, G., late one of the Masters of the Court of Exchequer	1,500	0	0
Campbell, Sir Archibald, late a Lord of Sessions and Justiciary, Scotland	1,400	0	0
Cranstown, George, ditto	1,950	0	0
Dunfermline, Lord, late Lord Chief Baron of Exchequer, Scotland	1,500	0	0
Dwyer, Francis, late Six-Clerk, Chancery, Scotland	2,000	0	0
Ellenborough, Lord, late Chief Clerk Court of Queen's Bench	1,088	10	8
Edgell, Henry, late Clerk of the Errors, Court of Exchequer	7,700	0	0
Hudson, Thomas, late one of the Prothonotaries, Court of Common Pleas	2,338	17	8
Hope, Right Hon. Charles, late Lord President of the Court of Sessions, Scotland	2,034	1	0
Johnson, William, late Justice, Court of Common Pleas, Ireland	3,600	0	0
Jardine, Sir Henry, late King's Remembrancer, Scotland	2,400	0	0
Kenyon, Hon. Thomas, late Filacer, Court of Queen's Bench	1,400	0	0
Kenyon and Ellenborough, Lords, late Custos. Brevium, do.	5,496	5	4
Littdale, Sir Joseph, late one of the Judges of the Queen's Bench	2,089	17	4
Moore, Arthur, late Justice, Court of Common Pleas, Ireland	2,625	0	0
Moncypenny, David, late Lord of Session, &c., Scotland	2,400	0	0
Miller, Sir William, late a Lord of Session, ditto	2,250	0	0
Platt, Samuel and Joshua, late Joint Clerks of the Papers, Queen's Bench	1,558	7	4
Plunkett, Lord, late Lord Chancellor of Ireland	3,692	6	1
Wynford, Lord, late Chief Justice, Court of Common Pleas	3,750	0	0
Watlington, George, late one of the Prothonotaries, ditto	2,005	11	6
White, Thomas, late Side Clerk, Court of Exchequer	1,114	1	0
Wellesley, Marquess, late Chief Remembrancer of the Court of Exchequer, Ireland	5,193	7	6

To these have to be added various fees, emoluments, and patronage to a vast amount. In the next place, a vast number of offices have similar salaries with nothing in the world to do,

d. and some of them, as master of the staghounds, 2,500*l.*; grand
 0 falconer, 1,372*l.*; wine tasters, craners and wharfingers, &c. seem
 0 designed to show how these very aristocrats could laugh at our
 8 folly while they pocketed our cash, by making the plea of salary
 0 as ridiculous as possible. Other offices, again, as that of tellers
 0 of the exchequer, were so constructed as to render the actual
 10 increase of expenditure as certain as possible, for these people
 0 had nothing to do but to charge two-and-a-half per cent. on all
 0 monies paid by government; so that the more money paid, the
 0 merrier for them. Accordingly, the profits of the tellership, or
 0 *telling* of the public money, has been calculated to bring in to
 0 these officers 95,000*l.* a-year.

0 But there was a step beyond this to which aristocratic assur-
 0 ance had gone, and that was to grant places and offices in reversion;
 0 that is to say, to grant them before they were vacant, to gaping
 0 expectants, that the government could not satisfy fast enough,
 8 or to allow those who held those good things to secure them to
 0 their children and friends. Common sense would dictate that
 0 as the affairs of a nation are of vital importance to every man in
 8 the nation, therefore the cleverest and fittest persons should be
 0 put into its offices, but this practice thrusts in any fool,
 0 merely to provide for that fool. Such a daring contempt of the
 0 people, such a cool avowal that government in their eyes is but
 0 a machine for feeding the aristocracy, not for the best admini-
 0 stration of the concerns of the kingdom, never could have been
 0 believed, had it not once been perpetrated.

0 This grandest stretch of invention of our high-blooded horse-
 0 leeches has led occasionally, as has been well remarked by the
 4 author of the Black Book, to the most ludicrous results. "The
 4 Countess of Mansfield," he observed, "receives 1000*l.* a-year
 0 from the Barbadoes planters; and the Duchess Dowager of
 0 Manchester 2,928*l.* a-year as collector of the customs outwards!
 0 Not long since a right honourable lady, a baroness, was *swooper*
 0 *of the mall* in the park; another lady was *chief usher* in the
 4 court of exchequer; and the Honourable Louisa Browning and
 1 Lady B. Martyn were *custos brevium*. Some of these offices,
 0 we see from the *Law List* have been recently merged in and
 6 executed by the husbands and children of these *high-born*
 0 dames. Then of noble lords, the Beresfords hold the appro-
 6 priate post of *wine-tasters, storekeepers, packers, and craners*, in
 0 Ireland." 1832.

0 Now there is nothing which the aristocracy in England en-
 0 deavour to brand so signally with disgrace, to hold up above all
 0 things to contempt and infamy, so much as pauperism. For this

purpose the stringent poor-law has been enacted, which separates husband, wife, and child. For this purpose, prizes, and even liveries have been granted by agricultural societies, with noblemen at their head, to labourers who maintained their families on starvation wages without coming to the parish for relief. But the question naturally occurs, if pauperism in the small be so disgraceful, what is it in the great? If pauperism on 6s. a week be so infamous, what is it on 10,000*l.* a-year? If it be so scandalous for a poor man when without work, and driven by the desperation of his whole family's famine, to crave *occasionally* a poor pittance of a few shillings from the parish, what is it for a rich man to crave, not occasionally, but constantly, not when in famine, but in plenty, for thousands from his suffering country? Do not ordinary degrees and proportions of things hold good in these cases as in all others? Must not pauperism be infamous, just in proportion to the grossness of its nature, to the enormity of its demands on the country, and to the non-necessity of the applicant? Must not a man who asks for thousands when he has thousands of his own, be thousands of times more shameless, more disgusting, and more of a pauper, than a man who having nothing, asks for next to nothing, and that only under the direst gripe of necessity? The thing is too palpable to need a word. The pauper of a parish is a passable creature compared with the pauper of a nation. The one is, at best, ashamed of his relief—the other brags of it and prides himself in it. Surely if the aristocracy found it necessary to pass the New Poor Law, to *throw the people on their own resources*, the people should pass another Act to throw the aristocracy on their own resources. What is good for Darby is good for Joan. If it be a merit to be thrown upon one's own resources, then who should be the first to exhibit this merit but the nobles of merit? If it be noble, the nobles should adopt it, or be forced into it. If they think it well to give a badge of honour to those poor men who are ready to starve their wives and children for it,—to give "a coat, waistcoat, and breeches, with the society's buttons," to those who keep off the parish, though earning only six shillings a week, how far more commendable it must be that the wealthy classes, who wear the national badges, who have "the coat, waistcoat, breeches, and buttons" of nobility, the stars and garters and robes, *should have these for keeping off the nation*, and for that only, seeing that with ample funds of their own, instead of six shillings a week, having perhaps their six hundred or six thousand a-week; instead of a house at 6*l.* 10*s.* and no potato garden, they have halls and ample estates, and are still always coming for relief

to the nation, and when they do come, coming for no trifles? Five thousand, and ten thousand a-year! Truly, one man may still steal a horse with impunity, and another be hanged for looking over a hedge!

By such means has England allowed the aristocracy to seize on and hold possession of all offices, pensions, in fact, of the whole mass of taxation.

CHAPTER XXII.

TAXATION.

How various and innumerable
 Are those who live upon *the rabble*!
 'Tis they maintain the Church and State,
 Employ the priest and magistrate;
 Bear all the charge of government,
 And pay the public fines and rent.
 Defray all taxes and excises,
 And impositions of all prices;
 Bear all the expense of peace and war,
 And pay the pulpit and the bar;
 Maintain all churches and religions,
 And give their pastors exhibitions!

BUTLER.

AND here we must take breath in a new chapter, to show by what means, while this debt has been accumulating to the amount of eight hundred millions, and the annual taxation to that of fifty millions, the aristocracy has contrived still to be the *receiving* instead of the paying party. Still to heave the weight of taxation from their shoulders to those of the people.

Having by their bargain with Charles II. freed themselves from all their feudal services, which from the conquest to the reign of James I. constituted with the crown lands, nearly the whole national revenue; and, having next got the crown lands from William III. too, they could not with any decency, when that monarch's wars, which were so profitable to them and theirs, had brought more charges than the popular taxes were adequate to defray, refuse to pay, or seem to pay

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something towards them. Therefore, in the fourth year of William III., a land tax was passed. This brought in then 1,474,927*l.*; or more than one-fourth of the whole revenue. This had a good look; a look well calculated to impose on the unthinking people. But what was the fact? The tax, though called a land tax, was a property tax. It was laid both on rental and on personal property;—4*s.* in the pound, on "the true yearly value of real property;" and 2*s.* in the 100*l.*, or 4*s.* in the pound on 6*l.*, the legal interest on money at that time. Thus the aristocracy got the credit of paying a fourth of the taxation, while in reality that amount was contributed by the whole community, on money, houses, incomes, and on everything except "debts, stock on hand, and household stuff."

Such was now the mass of wealth amongst the merchants, shopkeepers, and people in general, that the aristocracy actually paid a mere fraction of the amount. But even this fraction sat uneasily on them. They saw that all property was increasing in value, and they conceived the design of throwing the burden almost wholly on the personal property, trade and incomes of the general community. For this purpose various changes took place in this act, from its first passing in 1690 to 1697. The principal of these was, that the rate on *personal* property should be *first* carefully levied, and *then the land* should be taxed *to make up the deficiency*. Up to this period the sum raised by this tax was annually 1,474,927*l.* But then, finding that the people began to grow jealous of the exact levying of the amount on personal and not on real property, they gradually abandoned the levying it on personal property at all, seeing that the *people's* property and gains were rapidly becoming amply taxed by the customs, excise, and miscellaneous imports. From that period, therefore, to 1798 the land tax was collected on this principle, omitting personal property, and levying the tax on the land, not on its *growing* value, however, but on the old valuation of 1690, or that of the fourth of William and Mary, the first year of the land tax.

This was in two ways illegal and fraudulent. First, because the tax was, as worded, to be levied both on personal and real property; which, however, they carefully avoided, lest it should draw public attention to the actual state of property. Secondly, because the original act, and all the successive acts, up to the 9th of William III., or of 1697, had most clearly and distinctly enacted that the tax should be levied *bonâ fide* on the *growing value* of all lands; viz., in the very words of the act, "according to the full yearly value thereof, without any respect had to present rents reserved for the same, if such rents have

been reserved upon such lands or estates made, for which any fine or income hath been paid or reserved, or have been lessened or abated upon consideration of money laid out in improvements; *and without any respect had to any former rates thereupon imposed*, or making any abatement in respect to reparations, taxes, parish duties, or any other charges whatever."—Sect. 4.

Nothing could be clearer than that the whole yearly rack-rent was to pay 4s. in the pound. This clearness, however, was got rid of in the 9th of William III., or in 1697, and for a hundred years the tax was collected, not on the *present* real value, but on the old and original value of 1690, bringing in from 1,700,000*l.* to 2,000,000*l.* a-year. *Then*, our aristocratic legislators, in 1798, or the 38th of George III., seeing how enormously the real value of all property had increased, and how heavily the people were taxed to maintain the expenses of the French revolutionary war, grew fearful that they also should be called on to pay their due share, that is, according to the increased value of their land, and they called on their packed and purchased majority in the House of Commons, and passed a new act.

The customs, which in William's time, amounted to little more than a million, now amounted to upwards of ten millions; the excise, which then also yielded little more than one million, was now nearly fourteen millions; the miscellaneous taxes, which were then 784,362*l.*, were now become twelve millions; and the whole revenue, upwards of *thirty millions*, while they were merely paying nominally for all their lands *two millions*! and in reality not more than a third of that, for the cities and towns were paying the rest!

It was a view of things that might well make them uneasy, and they therefore took time by the forelock, and passed the act alluded to, that of the 38th of George III., which fixed for ever the levying of the land tax, at the rate of the collection in William III.'s time, or in 1690! Thus, while all the other taxes were to be levied on the *growing value* of property, *their sole tax* was to be exempted from this rule. They were to reap in offices, pensions, and places, the whole income of taxation, and to pay only a mere infinitesimal fraction. They were to lay on corn-laws, or any other laws, that should keep up their rents, and yet to pay not a penny of this augmented rent to the needs of the country. This was certainly the most audacious act of legislation that the whole six thousand years of the world's history can produce, and is the greatest insult to Englishmen, as a trading, active, sensible, and calculating nation, that could

possibly be offered. To this hour, however, this is the law and the operation of it, and the following table will show how this law has worked.

NATIONAL REVENUE AS BY PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT FOR 1842.

	£	s.	d.
Customs	23,515,374	12	0 $\frac{3}{4}$
Excise	14,602,847	5	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
Miscellaneous	11,420,402	9	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Post Office	1,495,540	9	0 $\frac{3}{4}$
Land Tax, on Lands and Tenements	1,214,430	0	0
Total	£52,248,594	16	3 $\frac{1}{2}$

By this table we perceive that since the passing of this most nefarious of all acts, in 1798, the land tax presents the fixed annual sum to a farthing of 1,214,430*l.*: while all the other sources of taxation have grown to the most astonishing extent. The customs to more than *twenty-three millions and a half*; the excise to more than *fourteen millions* and a half; the miscellaneous to nearly *eleven millions and a half*; the very post-office to nearly *a million and a half*; while the land tax stands at the frost-bound miserable sum of less than *a million and a quarter*; and that too for lands and tenements! This is the atom to which they have contrived to reduce that individual tax, which once was the great legitimate source of all taxation, which was indeed the price fixed for the possession of their estates,—1,214,430*l.* out of a total of FIFTY-TWO MILLIONS of taxation!

But even this table does not reach the gross amount of the present time. It comes up only to 1842, while the present income-tax, and the increase of other taxes, make the present total little short of sixty millions. In other words, our aristocratic legislators have taxed themselves to the amount of about *two per cent.*, and the industry of the country at *ninety-eight per cent.*! or, in still other words, they have defrauded the state to the present time of the taxation due on the *growing value* of their lands, which it had the same right to collect that a landlord under the laws of England had to collect an increased rent from his tenants.

Another remark is worthy of being made. The burden of excise which in the bargain with Charles II. they threw on the people, in lieu of their own feudal burdens, has grown from 294,950*l.* to 14,602,847*l.*! while their land tax, the *sole remnant* of the returns they engaged to make for the possession of their

lands has shrunk to 1,214,430*l*.! That is, the excise burden has grown to about *fifty times* its then amount, and this burden, spite of the wonderful growth of property, has remained less than stationary, because citizens and small proprietors pay a large share of even this; London alone paying 123,399*l*. of the land tax. To make the grossness of the affair the more striking, let us take a comparative view of our practice in taxation, and that of other great continental nations.

COMPARATIVE TAXATION IN 1842.

	Land and Property Tax.	Other Taxes.
France	£23,200,000 . .	£17,500,000
Russia	3,990,000 . .	3,667,000
Austria	8,795,000 . .	7,700,000
England, land-tax	1,214,430 . .	51,034,164

The fifty-one millions we may thus divide :—

Taxes on food, drinkables, and articles of clothing, and raw materials	£39,034,164
On transfer of personal property (not land), taxes on produce and popular industry	7,000,000
On stamps, mercantile affairs, medicines, assessed taxes, &c.	5,000,000
	<hr/> £51,034,164

Now what strikes us in this table? Why, that even in Russia and Austria, perfectly despotic countries, and with very wealthy and powerful aristocracies, land and property taxes amount to considerably more than all the other taxes. These aristocracies unrestrained by even a *show* of popular government have not the assurance to tax themselves less than they tax the people. The aristocracy of England alone dare, and is not ashamed to do that; nay, to tax the people *ninety-eight times* more than themselves. In France, again, where the aristocracy drove things to the same pitch that our aristocracy are now driving things here, and were in consequence swept away by the people in a crisis of national distress, and their lands divided amongst the million, what is the case? The landed property being now chiefly in the hands of small proprietors, or, in other words, being the property of the people, is well taxed by the government, which is become again partially aristocratic, and is made to constitute with other property *twenty-five millions*, while all other taxes whatever bring only *seventeen and a half millions*. That is, land and property pay nearly half as much again as the other sources of taxation. We, on the contrary,

are taxed by our aristocracy, twenty-five times as much as themselves in this one view of the case.

But this is far from going to the bottom of things:—this is far from the only view in which they have carefully exempted themselves from their proper share of the public burthens.

Having, by the law of primogeniture, cast the whole of their families, except the eldest son, on the public purse, they have turned every circumstance to the filling of that purse out of those of the people. Their estates, thus freed from the natural demands of their own offspring, and also fed by the rich streams of place and pension, have become vast and affluent beyond all parallel, many of them being estimated at from eight to eleven millions each. These enormous estates relieved by the public milch-cow of government from the maintenance of the greater part of the children from age to age; would it be believed by a committee selected from the most credulous of mankind, *pay neither legacy nor probate duty*, on passing by death from one person to another, while all other property is well taxed in this manner, and even a poor widow is mentioned by a certain writer,* who could not receive a trifle scraped together and left by her husband, because she had *5*l.** to pay for probate duty! Nay, even their personal property is exempt beyond a million, and many a mass of wealth of more than that sum totally escapes, in the very cases where people are best able to pay, while the family of scanty means must pay ten per cent. on their little all!

Such monstrous legislation never took place in any other country except England, or was tolerated by any people except the much-enduring English. This legislation proclaims its own origin. When the lion in the fable saw a statue of a man riding on a lion, he said—"Ay, any one may see who the sculptor was! Had a lion done the statue, the position would have been reversed." Had the people of England made their own laws, they would not pay *fifty millions*, while the aristocracy, the possessors of almost all the land in the country, and of almost everything in the country, pay *less than a million and a quarter*.

Pitt, in 1798, brought into parliament two legacy and probate duty bills. The one on real, the other on personal property: that on *personal* property readily passed both houses; that on *real* property was carried in the Commons *by one vote; the Speaker's!* The minister was informed, and that through the medium of his own secretary, that if he persisted in carrying it through the Upper House, he would cease to be prime minister

* Warner's Causes of National Distress.

of England. Of course, the aristocrats would not tax themselves; and, of course, Pitt dropped it, and by this means England has lost, from 1798 to this time, nearly *three hundred millions*—a sum, with the interest added, which would have gone far to pay off at least half the national debt.

If we were to proceed through the whole system of our taxation, we should find the whole laid by the aristocracy on the same basis of self-exemption, and imposition on the people, and the very poorest of the people. When the House Tax was in existence, how were the splendid palaces of the aristocracy assessed? Many of them, with the contents, are worth from one to three millions, yet they were rated at far less than many a shopkeeper in London gives for a single shop without any house to it; and at far less than good inns. Take a sample of this.

HOUSE TAX BEFORE ITS ABOLITION.

	Rate per Ann.		Rate per Ann.
Chatsworth . . .	£400	London Tavern . . .	£1000
Stowe and Blenheim . . .	300	White Hart, Bath . . .	900
Easton Hall . . .	300	Plough, Cheltenham . . .	850
Alnwick and Belvoir . . .	200	Old Ship, Birmingham . . .	750
Hatfield House . . .	200	Laing's Hotel, Manchester . . .	200
	<hr/> £1400		<hr/> £4100

All taxes on stamps, stamp receipts, and indentures, are laid in the same spirit and manner.

What is it you see here? Why, that the poor are called on to pay, in many cases, cent. per cent. more than the rich. A poor man having to give bond, or take up money to the amount of 550*l.* on mortgage, pays one pound for it; if a lord wants to do the same thing to the amount of 20,000*l.* or twenty millions, he pays—what? 20*l.*! The poor man who receives five pounds pays threepence for it; the rich man who receives 10,000*l.* pays—what? 10 shillings. The poor man who binds his son apprentice to a poor and handicraft trade, and, with all his exertion, scrapes up ten pounds, nay, five pounds premium, must pay a pound for the stamp. The rich man who binds his son to some lawyer or man of a most lucrative profession, and pays 1000*l.* or 2000*l.* premium, according to the benefits promised by that profession, pays only, in stamps, fifty pounds, or from fifty to eighty per cent. less.

TABLE, showing the Rate per Cent. upon the Highest and Lowest Sums mentioned.

BONDS AND MORTGAGES.			Duty.			Per cent. upon lower sum.			Per cent. upon higher sum.		
			£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Not exceeding £50		£	1	0	0				2	0	0
Above . . . 50 and not exceeding 100			1	10	0	3	0	0	1	10	0
100	"	200	2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0
200	"	300	3	0	0	1	10	0	1	0	0
300	"	500	4	0	0	1	6	8	0	16	0
500	"	1,000	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	10	0
1,000	"	2,000	6	0	0	0	12	0	0	6	0
2,000	"	3,000	7	0	0	0	7	0	0	4	8
3,000	"	4,000	8	0	0	0	5	4	0	4	0
4,000	"	5,000	9	0	0	0	4	6	0	3	7
5,000	"	10,000	12	0	0	0	4	9½	0	2	5
10,000	"	15,000	15	0	0	0	3	0	0	2	0
15,000	"	20,000	20	0	0	0	2	8	0	2	0
RECEIPTS.											
If £2 and under	£5		0	0	20	8	4	0	3	4	
5	"	10	0	0	30	5	0	0	2	6	
10	"	20	0	0	60	5	0	0	2	6	
20	"	50	0	1	00	5	0	0	2	0	
50	"	100	0	1	60	3	0	0	1	6	
100	"	200	0	2	60	2	6	0	1	3	
200	"	300	0	4	00	2	0	0	1	4	
300	"	500	0	5	00	1	8	0	1	0	
500	"	1,000	0	7	60	1	6	0	0	9	
1,000 and upwards			0	10	00	1	0				
APPRENTICES' INDENTURES.											
When the Premium is under	£30		1	0	0				5	6	8
If £30 and under	50		2	0	0	6	1	4	4	0	0
50	"	100	3	0	0	6	0	0	3	0	0
100	"	200	6	0	0	6	0	0	3	0	0
200	"	300	12	0	0	6	0	0	4	0	0
300	"	400	20	0	0	6	13	4	5	0	0
400	"	500	25	0	0	6	5	0	5	0	0
500	"	600	30	0	0	6	0	0	5	0	0
600	"	800	40	0	0	6	13	4	5	0	0
800	"	1,000	50	0	0	6	5	0	5	0	0

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SUGAR DUTIES.

	Cwt.	Duty.	Per cent.
Common raw sugar per cwt.	25s.	24s.	96
Middle quality	28s.	24s.	86
Fine quality	37s.	24s.	65
Double refined	70s.	24s.	34

Thus the poor man pays 96 per cent. while the rich pays 34, or the poor man pays 62 per cent. more than the rich. Tea, wines, &c. pay similarly *considerate* duties. Port wine pays 165 per cent. duty, super clarets only 28 per cent. To see how this system acts in practice, however, take the case of a poor individual, William Gladstone, a labourer, who had his case laid before Parliament on the 18th February, 1842. He received 11 shillings per week in wages, and spent it in the following articles:—Tea, 1 oz.; coffee, 2 oz.; sugar, 8 oz.; meat, 8 oz.; flour, 8 lbs.; ale, 7 pints; brandy, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint. The cost of these articles, duty free, would be 2s. 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.

Duties on the same, 5s. 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.

7s. 7d.

The rest for rent, clothing, &c. Now, is it possible to find a corresponding case of any nobleman paying more than half his income in taxes? But it would be well if the iniquitous system ended here. Corn, the staple food of the people, and the great medium of exchange between foreign nations and us, for our manufactures, is kept out, except at a price which holds up the aristocratic rents cent. per cent. above their natural level, and to that extent destroys the trade with foreign nations. That the aristocracy of England, after having laid eight hundred millions of debt on the country, and the weight of taxation we have here described, may keep up their monstrous rents and establishments, our poor cottagers are starved, and the very manufacturing system of this country menaced with ruin. America, incensed that we will not take her corn for our goods, has become a manufacturer for herself, and the consequent effect on our exports thither in ten years is that they have sunk from 9,053,583*l.* to 5,283,020*l.* per annum, or nearly one-half—an awful prospect in that quarter. Germany, equally incensed that we refused her proposition in 1819 to take *her* corn for our goods on equal terms, commenced the Zollverein, or Commercial League, by which it seeks by high duties to shut out our goods, and, like the Americans, to manufacture its own. It not only does this now

to a great extent, but it is its great plan to invite other nations to come in and join in this league against us, offering them great advantages over us. It thus has learned a lesson out of the book of our aristocratic corn-law legislators, and, setting up Buonaparte's continental system in a peaceful, but far more dangerous shape, fights us with our own weapons of exclusion. Belgium has this year acceded to the league, with a preference for its iron of 30 per cent. over ours, which will henceforth go for all the enormous extent of German railroads instead of ours. Our iron, our engineers, have been employed hitherto for all their railroads and chain-bridges. This traffic will now stop; these men may return home, and the effect will not be long before it be disastrously felt, not only in the iron districts, but in Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Paisley, and all our great manufacturing towns. But this is but a small part of the mischief. Hamburg and Holland, closely importuned to join the German league, have hitherto resisted; but this accession of Belgium, the *chef d'œuvre* of the league, will compel them to come in. Hamburg and Rotterdam are equally jealous of Antwerp and Ostend. These ports, once in the hands of the league, will enable the German confederation to carry out their great scheme of a mercantile fleet, in rivalry of Hamburg and Holland. To prevent this catastrophe, these states will come in. France will find that *here* she too can touch us in the tenderest place; and Austria is already on the move. If our aristocracy, therefore, persist in holding fast the corn-laws, a few years will see the whole continent bound against us in a war of tariffs. Nay, Germany already extends her views far wider. With a fleet, or with the ports of Hamburg, Antwerp, and Rotterdam in her possession, she will wrest, if possible, the remaining trade of North America and the Brazils from us. She is already in treaty with both these countries for this purpose; nay, the Brazilian envoy, charged with reciprocation of this very proposal, is already in Germany.

Such are the fruits of aristocratic government, aristocratic taxation and exclusion, which, having sucked the very marrow of the British people's industry, threatens, in its blind and obdurate selfishness, to break the very bones of its commerce. And what is already the condition of the agricultural labourer under the effects of this very system which is boasted to be for his protection against foreign competition? The farmer, with all his artificial price of corn, is so devoured with the still higher artificial rent, that he is compelled to save all that he can out of labour. Hence, the dreadful situation of the agricultural labourers, as it has of late been revealed; a condition more lamentable

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and demoralising than that of any slavery which ever roused the indignation of British philanthropists. Hence, around the rural palaces of the aristocracy, where every luxury and splendour exists, and where the gay carriage conveys the joyous group from one such palace to another, to rich dinners and nocturnal fêtes, lie the hovels of a more than Helot peasantry—hovels worse than stys, where decency, purity, or comfort have no provision, and where, as described by themselves, the fathers and mothers of craving children have "*the trembles*" from constant hunger and half nakedness.

Young England, an aristocratic sect, has lately proclaimed much sympathy with the condition of the poor, and a common desire to amend that condition. When they raise their voices against this monstrous pile and system of taxation, for the abolition of the corn-laws, and for free trade—the sole hope of the country and the coming generation, we will believe them sincere. In the mean time, we have only too amply proved that the aristocracy is in possession of the whole mass of taxation. The next step will show them equally possessed of

THE ARMY AND NAVY.

To husband our space, we shall not go into details on this head. Let any one get the Army and Navy Lists, and see who they find there as officers. Are they not the aristocracy again, and their sons and dependants? In the army aristocratic wealth can purchase what aristocratic influence fails to gain. I do not mean to say that a Nelson may not occasionally rise in the navy, or a Clive in the army, from a poor parson's son to the top of the profession, by the mighty power of genius, or that many a meritorious officer may not advance himself by skill and bravery; but what is the general fact? Who are at the head of army and navy? Who preside omnipotently at the War Office and the Admiralty! The aristocracy: and to such an extent do aristocratic patronage prevail and aristocratic *besieging* prevail, that the one great complaint in army and navy is that of men of rank and connexion being promoted over the heads of the poor and the friendless. How many thousands of poor lieutenants are starving on half-pay after a quarter of a century of services, while they see—and their hearts burn at the sight—troops of featherbed and fashionable heroes living in the luxurious splendour of admiralships, commanderships, governorships of nice, easy, well-paid stations, of generalships, colonelcies, and holiday rank, with full and plenteous pay! How many of those poor lieutenants are obliged to live abroad in order to keep soul and body together, and give their children

any education at all; and still, when they come home and seek some humble commission or post for their sons, find the doors of the Admiralty, War Office, and every government office crowded with aristocratic applicants, that impatiently shoulder them aside, and laugh in their meagre and woe-begone faces?

Such is and must be the case so long as we continue to possess an aristocratic incubus instead of a real, popular, efficient government, whose object and interest it is to seek out and reward industry and merit. Yet there should be enough to pay any meritorious officer very well, for the total charge of our army is:—

For half-pays, pensions, superannuations, &c.	£2,278,208
For the effective troops, those paid by the India Company	
deducted	4,016,043
For the Ordnance department	2,084,549
For Yeoman Cavalry	82,369
Total	<u>£8,461,169</u>

For the navy:—

Half-pays, pensions, and superannuations	£1,390,958
Effective	4,618,917
Ordnance department	<u>729,443</u>
	6,739,618
Total British army and navy	<u>£16,200,987</u>

With this pretty round sum for army and navy expenses for a nation that Providence has separated and defended from the whole world, but which must exist for aristocratic support, we will pause, and commence a new chapter.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHURCH ; CROWN LANDS ; PUBLIC CHARITIES, &c. ; ALSO THE
PROPERTY OF THE ARISTOCRACY.

Tithe,—

That tribute paid indeed to Antichrist,
Though meant for God; whereby the arch-enemy
Compact, most serpent-subtle and malign,
Gives over to the parson his base pelf,
And takes for his own share the peace, and love,
And charity that should have blessed mankind.

ERNEST.

IN the commencement of this work we said that Howitt in his History of Priestcraft had only laid bare one section of the subject, in that the Church was but one section of the usurpations of the aristocracy of England. That is the fact. The Church of England is aristocratic property, wholly aristocratic property, and yet but a single section of this usurped property in this patient nation. But though only a section, it is one of the richest, and most valuable of all. The pension list *only* produces 890,000*l.* a-year; the army and navy produce 16,000,000*l.*, but then a good lot of ships, beef and biscuits, gunpowder and ball, have to be paid for out of that; the Church robbed as it has been, constantly "*in danger*" as it has been, (from its own clergy, who have alienated and wasted a vast mass of its property,) yet produces its fair 10,000,000*l.* a-year, and scarcely anything to take out of it. The army and navy are not to be carried on, if our government returns be correct, without more than 250,000 common men:—

THE ARMY.

139 regiments, containing	122,568 men
Half-pay officers and men	80,859 ditto
Ordnance department	8,932 ditto
Yeomanry	14,274 ditto
	226,633
Navy, 44,005; officers, 4,990	48,935
Total	275,568

Thus, allowing 25,000 for officers of all sorts, the aristocracy have 250,000 men to support out of their gross booty of 16,000,000*l.*

But the Church! in all England, Wales, and Ireland, some 16,000 parishes, requires only so many clergy, of all sorts; and so easy the duty, for it requires no faculty, acquirement, or accomplishment, but that of the simple art of reading, and a few bought sermons to read, that very few *poor lieutenants* are required. There is no need of marching, no foreign service. There is no *taking the field* against the enemy: The old enemy, the serpent, is the only enemy that has dared for these eight hundred years to invade the soil of England: and so well are all his ways and tricks, and modes of attack known, that the clergy scorn to take the field against him. The country has built a fort for them in every parish, called a church, and into that the people can run if they like. There the clergyman is commander, soldier, artilleryman, sentinel, and everything; and all the arms that he wants are the Bible and Common Prayer Book, which are his great guns; a few lithographed sermons, at a few shillings the dozen, for small arms and ammunition! Neither the duty nor the expense is worth mentioning. Nay so light is the service, and in such contempt do our valiant commanders of the forts of the church militant hold the enemy, that many of them will undertake to hold out and defend half-a-dozen of them, and others will wander through all the lands on the face of the earth, and leave their charge to a *poor lieutenant*, or in other words, a curate, without the slightest fear of the old dragon devouring the people in their absence, as he attempted to devour St. Michael.

The church then may be termed the richest, the most profitable and snug of all the aristocratic possessions in this favoured land. No marching expense; no wear and tear of field equipments; little need of fighting men, scarcely any of ammunition, *and ten millions a-year to divide!* Nay, what is more; change of ministry makes no change to them. *They* are not swept out of their offices. Once in, they are in for life. The world may go round, or may stand still, if it please; there may be ins and outs of administrations; tories may ascend and whigs descend, or *vice versa*; armies may be raised or disbanded; ships of war built, wrecked, blown up, or only laid up, and paid off; What matters it? They are all snug and at home with *ten millions to divide!*

Lucky, but ungrateful fellows! for they are always abusing their best friend. Other warriors laud their enemy, for by so doing they enhance their own prowess, but the clergy!—they are for ever and unmercifully abusing *their* enemy—the devil! And yet, where were their trade without him? What need of them? There once came a rumour that the devil was dead, and all the clergy sunk aghast into their elbow chairs! Oh,

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woeful day for them, had that rumour proved true. As Sam Slick says, "it had been gone goose with them." Ungrateful, the most ungrateful of living mortals, to abuse, denounce, and vilify that ancient foe, who keeps them in a snug little property in this country of *ten millions a-year!*

But perhaps some uninformed person may say, How is this their property? It is thus, from the returns of 1821. Since then many churches have been erected by government, and made over to the Establishment. But this is near enough, taking England and Wales alone, without Ireland, for a demonstration of the principle.

Living	in the gift of the crown	1,048
Ditto	"	bishops	.	.	.	1,301
Ditto	"	deans and chapters	.	.	.	981
Ditto	"	universities	.	.	.	743
Ditto	"	private persons	.	.	.	6,619
						<hr/> 10,693 <hr/>

Now, if we sift to the bottom of all these different classes, at whom do we arrive as the proprietors? At this same everlasting aristocracy. The crown, it is stated, has 1,048 in its gift. The crown, that is, *the ministers* of the crown, for the time being; who are part of the aristocracy, and of those the Lord Chancellor alone claims to bestow a large proportion. In fact, the ministry notoriously use these to purchase support for the aristocratic system. By means of these, parliamentary votes are bought, and popular liberty sold. By means of these, corrupt legislators, and corrupt, subservient parsons, are dispersed through the country to aid the views of government.

The livings in the bishops' gifts go, of course, amongst their sons and relatives, or to the slaves of government for whom they were expressly reserved as the price of the bishops' own preferment. The same with those in the gift of the deans and chapters. The same with those of the universities; which schools, again, the aristocracy have usurped, as machinery for stock-ing their church; and are therefore become their property. The rest, *i.e.*, 6,619, are in the hands of the aristocracy themselves. Some of them, as the Duke of Bedford, hold as many as sixteen of them.

Thus the whole are the forts and actual property of this domineering class. It has been said that the Church of Rome, by its purgatory, and its professed power of praying souls out of it, had seized not only on this world but on the next. The

English aristocracy have done the very same thing. They have not only seized on the land and government, but also on the sole office of conducting men to heaven, or—elsewhere. This assumption the English people have had spirit enough to spurn at, and hence the large body of dissenters; but the aristocracy not only still keep hold of the property, but compel the dissenters, by tithes, church-rates, and fees, to pay to and support their property—the church. Nay, if we look a little farther we shall see that a vast mass of the worldly property which the aristocracy holds, has been filched from the church. The bishops have leased and granted to their families, till a very great quantity of the actual lands of the church have become alienated, and are never inquired after. Nay; they have openly sold what they declared inalienable; a striking example of which is the Tattenhall estate, sold by the dean and chapter of St. Paul's to Lord Southampton. And again, whence came the estates of the Russells, and many other overgrown aristocratic houses? They were filched from the plunder of the churches and monasteries in the reigns of Henry VIII. and of Edward VI., when the members of the royal council helped themselves to large slices of church and crown property in the king's name. In short, the property of the aristocracy is wholly made up of fraudulent acquisitions from the crown, the church, and the people. If any one doubt whether the church be the property of the aristocracy, let him ask for its reform. When the whigs came into power as reformers, the dissenters and the people fondly hoped for such a reform, and with great simplicity asked for it. Lord John Russell and his whig coadjutors did accordingly for some time keep up a great bluster about this reform, but finally backed quietly out; and at length, when they saw that they had lost the confidence of the people, turned round and bluntly declared that the church was a great and beneficent institution, and must not be touched. In other words, it was, and is, a great property of the aristocracy, and you might just as well ask the Queen to give you her civil list, and John o'Nokes and John o'Styles to give you their acres. Let us pass to

THE CROWN LANDS.

"The crown lands of England," says Blackstone, "or *terres dominicales regis*, being either the share reserved to the crown at the original distribution of landed property, or such as came to it afterwards by forfeitures or other means, were formerly very large and extensive At present they are contracted into a very narrow compass, having been almost entirely granted away to private subjects. This has occasioned the parliament often to interfere, and particularly after King William III. had

greatly impoverished the crown, an act was passed, whereby all future grants or leases from the crown for any longer than thirty-one years, or three lives, are declared to be void, except with regard to houses, which may be granted for fifty years.*

Not only so large were these estates, but Blackstone says in another place, they were "capable of being increased to a magnitude truly formidable; for there are few estates in the kingdom that have not, at some period or other since the conquest, been vested in the hands of the king by forfeiture, escheat, or otherwise. But, fortunately for the liberty of the subject, this hereditary landed revenue, by a series of improvident management, is sunk almost to nothing, and the casual profits arising from the other branches of the *census regalis*, are likewise almost alienated from the crown. In order to supply the deficiencies of which, we are now obliged to have recourse to new methods of raising money unknown to our early ancestors, which methods constitute the king's *extraordinary revenue*. For the public patrimony having got into the hands of *private subjects*, it is but reasonable that *private contributions* should supply the public service."†

Here we have some curious facts, and also some curious reasoning. It would be *fortunate* indeed if this kingly mass of wealth, in passing out of the royal hands, had gone amongst the people, and had not built up a still more formidable power than that of the king, who is but one man, namely, that of the aristocracy, who are many, and by this wealth and their combination have become omnipotent. It is quite true that it is fitting that the *hands* into which this property has gone should bear that public burden which it was meant to bear; but that the *whole public* should bear it instead of these hands, is a gross injustice. How all that has been accomplished, however, we have shown. Blackstone, and other authors, go into various speculations on the origin and various descriptions of crown lands. It is quite enough that William of Normandy claimed the whole country as by right of conquest. That he gave out a certain portion to his followers on certain conditions, which conditions they afterwards contrived to get rid of, as this history shows, and threw the burdens belonging to those lands on the people. That portion which the king reserved for himself, whether in forest or demesne lands, whether in Bocland or Folkland, that is, in lands held by charter or without it, by the common people, was immense, and might, as Blackstone observes, have made the monarch extremely formidable. But,

* B. i. p. 286.

† B. i. p. 306.

in all ages, the greed of the aristocracy was actively pulling at these lands, to drag them away from the crown. The clergy, too, a branch of the aristocracy, was also so active in this work that at one time they are said to have got possession of one-third of the land of England, and lest they should swallow up the whole, the statute of mortmain was obliged to be passed by Edward I. to restrain them. Various monarchs too, as Edward IV., and Henry VIII., reclaimed the grants which former kings had made of the crown lands; and Henry VIII. laid violent hands on the lands of the church.

Spite of all this, the aristocracy returned to the charge, and got away again in William III.'s time nearly all the lands of the crown. The more completely to absorb them, in Queen Anne's reign, they persuaded her to give up for her life the crown lands for a civil list of 700,000*l.* a-year. This has been repeated with every succeeding sovereign, and it must now occasion a melancholy smile to hear the pretence on which ministers prevailed on the crown to make this arrangement. It was no other, than that the crown lands "should defray a part of the expense of government, and *lessen the burthen of the subject by means of the preservation and improvement of the crown lands.*"

Such has been "the preservation and improvement" of these lands by these faithful stewards, that they now bring scarcely anything at all in; the greater part of them are got into their own grasp, and what do remain, have their revenues devoured by aristocratic *managers* that are fixed upon them.

To go no farther back than James I.'s reign, Dr. Davenant, in his "Treatise on the Land of England and its Produce," calculates that the estates of the crown were then nine millions of acres. Now if these acres had been well preserved and managed by these aristocratic stewards to this time, they could not, at the moderate rental of one pound per acre, produce less than three millions a-year.

That were a very fine estate for our gracious Queen Victoria! If she ask why she has it not, we can tell her, that it is because her nobility have got it, that nobility which, in the reign of her good old grandfather, George III., not only lost him his fine estate of North America, but also persuaded him to pass the "*Nullum tempus* Act," by which no monarch could ever again compel them to disgorge their plunder of the royal lands.

A fine estate were that, indeed, for Queen Victoria, who, so far from having to come to parliament for a yearly salary, might have defrayed a great amount of those charges of government with her surplus revenue, which it was meant, and formerly

made to discharge. Or what a fund would that two million and a half yearly have been for paying off the national debt! But they who set on that debt, had thus not only made the crown a pauper, but had embezzled the national estates which should have prevented the accumulation of a national debt, or paid it off when accumulated. In the reign of James I., these three millions of acres, however, were reckoned only to produce to the crown 66,870*l.* a-year. It produced *that* to the crown, but its real value must have been much more. Take then the rapidly increasing value of property during the last century, and the compound interest that thus has been lost, and you cannot estimate the proceeds of annual rent and interest at less than three millions a-year for the whole period. Charge then the aristocracy of England with three millions a-year for the crown lands that they have abstracted from the national possession, only since the revolution, and that were a moderate charge, for many of these lands lie in and about London, and are worth, not one pound, but four, five, and even ten pounds per annum, nay, in London we may say some hundreds of pounds per acre,—and we shall see what they are indebted to this nation for this particular abuse,—for 156 years, at three millions a year—*four hundred and sixty-eight millions*, reducing our ugly debt from 768,000,000*l.* to 300,000,000*l.* The aristocracy are clearly indebted to this nation to that extent,—but that is but a small part of what they owe it.

As, however, we are not likely to get paid by them, the more important question is—“How much of the crown property have they left? Of this we are not aware of any recent and exact return. Perhaps the nearest that we can come to the subject is a return of the 26th of George III., or in 1786. They then stood thus:—

- 130 manors.
- 52,000 acres of arable, meadow, and pasture land.
- 1,800 houses in London and Westminster.
- 450 houses, mills, and cottages in the country parts of England, exclusive of houses demised with manors or farms.

The rental of these, so far as given in at the time, though the list was not complete, was something more than 100,000*l.* for England only. Now, notwithstanding the wonderful increase in the value of landed and other property since then, by the return of 1841 the income of the crown lands was given in as 167,500*l.*, or the whole income from the crown property thus:—

Woods, Forests, and Land revenue	£167,500
Duchy of Lancaster	12,000
Duchy of Cornwall	18,500
	<hr/>
	£198,000

We have, however, while writing this received the very last annual report of her Majesty's Commissioners of Woods and Forests, that is, up to June, 1844, and its account of these matters stands thus:—the pure land rentals are nearly as above, that is, 198,364*l.* 13*s.* 1½*d.*, but the receipts for fines, materials sold, harbour dues, &c., with the royal rentals, &c. of Ireland, Wales, Scotland, and the Isles of Alderney and Man, make a total, with the produce of the Forests, Woods, &c., and

extraordinary receipts of	£433,881	1 <i>s.</i>	3½ <i>d.</i>
The expenses of management	165,060	13	10½
	<hr/>		
would seem to leave the pure income	268,820	7	5
but then the former balances in hand of	94,207	15	8
	<hr/>		
leave it only	£174,612	11	9

Nay, to allow for a proper fund still in hand, the Commissioners have been only able to pay into the Exchequer 117,500*l.*, which would be the available income of her Majesty for the year, did she depend upon her hereditary estates alone.

What then becomes of the assertion of those who protest that the crown has given up for its civil list property of equivalent value? The queen's civil list, the most moderate one for several reigns, being, in fact, but about one-third of that of the extravagant George IV., is still 470,000*l.* Now if she had to depend on her crown property for maintenance on this scale, with the 30,000*l.* per annum to Prince Albert, she would find herself 382,500*l.* a-year deficient; or, supposing her to consume, in her necessity, the balances of both the past and present years, and having nothing to meet the expenses of the half-year till new rents come in, 231,180*l.* deficient. The fact is, that the aristocracy have got her estate; and strange would be the tale from every part of the country, had we a faithful account of the services *for* which, and the rate *at* which they obtained it. If we look again at the management of her estate, we shall see that the proper produce is devoured by a whole swarm of aristocratic locusts which are *quartered* upon it. Take the forests as an example—

1832.	Receipts.			Expenditure.		
New Forest . . .	£9,676	17s.	6½d.	£8,603	4s.	0d.
Parkhurst Forest . . .	400	2	9	869	13	5½
Dean Forest . . .	9,079	10	9	7,327	17	3½
Windsor Forest . . .	204	17	9	1,657	5	0
Holt Forest . . .	953	14	9	1,839	17	4½
Bere Forest . . .	1,040	11	8½	1,136	8	5
Whittlewood and Saley . .	2,599	13	9	3,147	3	11½
Delamere Forest . . .	125	7	2½	1,230	16	9
Wichwood Forest . . .	630	13	2	460	3	6
Waltham Forest . . .	664	19	1½	469	9	8
Sherwood Forest . . .	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Park . . .	393	6	5½	629	2	9½
	£26,369 14 11½			£27,371 2 2½		

A beautiful balance-sheet! What would be thought of a gentleman whose estate produced twenty-six thousand, and who paid for management *twenty-seven thousand*? But some of the individual items are beyond all example in the history of stewardship; as Windsor Forest, receipt 204*l.*; expenditure 1,657*l.* Holt, receipt 953*l.*; expenditure 1,839*l.* Delamere, receipt 125*l.*; expenditure 1,230*l.*, &c.

The woods present an aspect nearly as bad.

	Receipts.			Expenditure.		
High Meadow Woods . . .	£2,716	2	8	£2,560	4	7½
Lanercost Priory Woods . . .	0	0	0	32	15	0
Chopwell Woods . . .	736	10	5	536	6	1½
Gillingham Woods . . .	819	2	9½	1,003	5	5½
Meopham Woods . . .	276	12	1	545	6	5½
Eltham Woods . . .	672	19	11	683	14	5

I have taken the year 1832, because that year gives a view of the particular items; but the system of an *Annual Report* adopted by Parliament does, in this department, seem to have operated a degree of beneficial change.

The total income from the Woods and Forests is . . .	£39,395	13	7
The charges for management are <i>only</i> . . .	36,595	8	5

Leaving a clear revenue to her Majesty of all her Woods and Forests, of . . .	£2,800	5	2
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There evidently wants still a vast reform here. A rental of *thirty-nine* thousands, and a charge for stewardship of *thirty-six*!

If any one be yet simple enough to ask how is this? How comes it that the queen has her estates so badly managed by the ministry? we must answer with another query—What does

the ministry manage well? Is our debt, are our financial difficulties, are our corn-laws, and decreasing trade with America and Germany, proofs of good management? As regards the royal estates, the answer is simple. The ministry have friends, as well as sons and daughters. They have majorities to maintain in parliament, and *therefore* the forests have a great number of stewards, rangers, keepers, &c. &c., each with little or nothing to do, except large salaries and so many fat bucks per annum to receive. Many of these rangers, &c. never see these forests, and only range through them in imagination. They are all noblemen or gentlemen, and have besides, good handsome houses or lodges, besides good bargains in leases, which leases in time turn often into freeholds.

The forest of Whittlewood had but 5,424 acres, and not less than *seventy* officers. If any one goes through a royal forest and sees how it is cut up into farms and patches of enclosure, and is filled with fine houses and their parks, he may form some idea of the picking and stealing by *legal* means from the great national estate. The very ratcatcher of some of these forests is a gentleman, as in the New Forest, with 300*l.* a-year. The management of the duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster, with all their minerals and mines, is of the same kind, and is carried on upon the same principle, and for the same purposes. But the tale of these peculations and aristocratic appropriations is endless; let us take a few individual cases that illustrate the whole subject most livingly.

Such was the profligacy of ministers during the long French war, when they wanted all possible parliamentary influence and political support to maintain their proceedings against the murmurs of the people, that they everywhere bought up partisans with good pennyworths of the crown lands. These they first let for almost nothing, and then estimating them by their rental, sold them for nothing. Thus, an estate worth 5,000*l.*, was leased out at 10*l.* per annum, and then sold for 200*l.* An estate comprising the whole of Piccadilly, from Park-lane to Swallow-street, together with all the back lanes, was sold to the Pulteney family, six years after a lease had been granted at the rental of 12*l.* 6*s.* 10*d.* for 500*l.* !!! The fine park of Bowood, in Wiltshire, after being leased at 30*l.* a-year, was sold for 468*l.* 10*s.* The manor of Spalding, of the annual value of 4000*l.*, after being held by the trustees of the Earl of Dalkeith for no consideration at all, was leased to the Duke of Buccleugh at 5*l.* per annum, and afterwards entirely severed from the crown without any inquiry whatever!!! In Yorkshire, the estate of Seaton and another place, together with the alum-works, were sold to Lord Mulgrave for 27,000*l.*, the

annual value of which was 2,296*l.*, including the alum-works, estimated at 20,000*l.* The proceeds of the sale never became applied to any *known* public service. An estate forfeited by the Earl of Derwentwater, with 9,000*l.* per annum, was sold to two of the commissioners of woods and forests, for 1,000*l.*!!! This was too gross to escape, and two members of the collective wisdom having dabbled in the transaction, were expelled, and other two reprimanded. It is difficult to say whether the whigs or tories sported most in land jobs, but the whigs had certainly the best of it in the reign of William III., and the two first princes of Hanover.

In 1770, the manor of Newark, in Nottinghamshire, was leased to the Duke of Newcastle at 482*l.* a-year. According to the lease, the fine should have been 3,374*l.*, but only 200*l.* was paid. This lease was renewed in 1806 for thirty years, at 2,000*l.* a-year. It consists of 960 acres, covered with dwellings, tolls of bridges, fisheries, and markets, and yielded to the holder 4,000*l.* a-year, and were it let without reference to electioneering purposes, would bring 7,000*l.* This public property was most notoriously made use of to send up from Newark two tory members to parliament, in opposition to the people. In 1836 the lease fell out, and the property was sold by ministers.

In Lincoln there was a crown estate, valued at 937*l.* per annum, let to Sir W. G. Guise for 37*l.* a-year, as a means of political corruption. In 1815 a lease was granted to Sir John Throgmorton of property at a rent of 115*l.*, the sworn value of which was 1,104*l.* a-year. In 1802 a lease was granted of Sunk Island, at the mouth of the river Humber, for thirty-one years, at 700*l.* for the first year, 2,000*l.* for the second, and 3,100*l.* for the remainder of the term. The lessee, the Rev. John Lonsdale, a good judge in land speculations, expended 10,000*l.* in embankments and other improvements, and then let the whole for 10,000*l.* a-year!! The land was described in the commissioners' report as a parcel of sandy land; in reality, it consists of 6,000 acres of the finest soil in the kingdom; tithe-free, and worth fifty shillings an acre! In 1812, freehold estates to the amount of 1,084*l.* yearly value were sold at twenty years' purchase;—the manor of Eltham with royalties, lands, &c., for 569*l.*; King's Cliffe, 148*l.*; the manor of the chapter of Beverley, with all rights, courts, demesnes, and tenements belonging, for 224*l.*; and part of the race-course at Newmarket for 154*l.*! All these were sold at twenty years' purchase, the land-tax having been previously bought by the crown at *thirty-nine* years' purchase *from itself*; and sold again at *twenty* years' purchase.

In the woods and forests the aristocracy helped one another at

the same rate to the national property. A broad riding was cut for the Duke of Newcastle through Sherwood forest; the *timber felled was given to him*, and the paling raised at each side was *charged to the public* at 1,787*l.*! To another nobleman a right of pasturage for one horse in Wolmar Forest was granted, and for this pasturage for one horse 450 acres of the best land was appropriated! Rockingham forest and an estate adjoining were let to Lord Westmoreland for less than *one farthing an acre*! The interests of the crown in this property were valued so long ago as 1704 at 50,000*l.*; they were bought by Lord Westmoreland in 1796 for 10,038*l.*, and even this money was not paid till 1809! Sherwood forest contains 95,000 acres, and from 1761 to 1786 the disbursements for management exceeded the receipts by 9,037*l.* Some trees which were blown down, were valued at 2,457*l.*, and sold, but *fees and allowances* swallowed all up except 850*l.*!! During this period the receipts of the crown property in Wales amounted to 123,717*l.*; the expenses for management to 124,466*l.*, so that the exchequer was minus by the principality, 749*l.*

In London the public property has been equally given away for political influence. In 1815 there were no less than 31 houses in Piccadilly and the neighbourhood let for 125*l.* a-year, which in 1786 were valued at 600*l.* a-year, and now must be worth thousands. Nineteen houses were let in Holborn, near the Turnstile, for 564*l.*, and a premium of 100*l.*, which were worth at least from 100*l.* to 130*l.* each, per annum. In the Spring-garden Terrace were three messuages well worth 200*l.* each per annum, *all* let for 200*l.*, and a premium of 500*l.* Other houses in Pall Mall and Piccadilly have been disposed of on terms equally low, in fact, at mere nominal rents. A house, No. 17, Charles-street, has been let on a thirty years' lease of 110*l.* a-year. Within a month after the completion of the lease, the tenant let it for 230*l.* a-year! Mr. Huskisson said that the rental of houses in the capital belonging to the crown, when the leases fall in, will not be less than 525,000*l.* What a means of *influence*! What accommodation it affords to ministers for their friends and supporters! Mr. Daniel Whittle Harvey, when in 1830 he brought these matters before parliament, declared that it presented a source of corruption sufficient to contaminate any parliament, and pervert its members to any purpose.

Most of the parties involved in the preceding transactions were *peers of the realm*, or members of parliament. Out of 408 tenants of the crown of a rental of 200,000*l.* a-year, in 1786, upwards of 200 were MEN OF TITLE. Amongst these were the Dukes of St. Albans, Gloucester, and Newcastle, Earl Bathurst,

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Viscount Bacon, the Earl of Lichfield, and in fact, they were as "thick as the peerage could make them."

Even in this present Report, with the eye of parliament and of the country on the business, we find some striking proofs of the neglect, mismanagement, and aristocratic plunder of the crown property, to make which good the country has to pay now large sums. At page 5, we find the commissioners stating that they have purchased the Sudbrook park estates, *formerly part of Richmond park*, at the price of 30,453*l.*! This property granted or taken we do not learn when, by some aristocrat, from the crown, most likely to serve some corrupt purpose, has now to be got back at the cost to the country of *thirty thousand pounds!* They refer also to *another estate formerly a part of this park*, and purchased in 1834 from the executors of Lord Huntingtower. At page 9, we find the *hereditary keepership* of Holyrood park, Edinburgh, has been purchased of the Earl of Haddington for another 30,674*l.*! A beautiful specimen of the effect of granting *hereditary* offices. At page 28, we find in an account of a piece of land sold at Bedford, a reference to a government lease to the Bedford family. This lease consisted, it is stated, of the honour of Ampthill and other property, the annual value of which in 1773, the period of granting the lease, was stated to be 508*l.* 6*s.* 11*d.*, the rent reserved 50*l.*, with a fine of 520*l.* Thus, even at the low rate at which crown lands were valued, 450*l.* a-year was given to the Bedford family from 1773, a time, let it be remembered, when the American war made the minister, Lord North, ready to buy the influence of such men as the Duke of Bedford at any rate, till the death of the late duke. What a robbery must this *one* transaction have been to the country! But the whole country was full of such. Of this property, it is added, that a great portion was sold to Lord Holland in 1820 for 14,561*l.* 17*s.* 1*d.* - This was no doubt *another cheap* bargain, and yet it shows that even a portion of what the Duke of Bedford was giving 50*l.* a-year for to government, was worth 14,561*l.*; or 738*l.* a-year! If we take the whole to be only worth 20,000*l.*, and the lease to have continued till the late duke's death, say seventy years, the loss to the country and the gain to the Russells on this one bargain has been at least 70,000*l.*

Thus, in fact, the aristocracy have wheedled the monarchs out of the bulk of the crown lands; to another great portion they have helped one another as ministers, and of what is ostensibly left, they have possessed themselves by all sorts of nominal offices; the very miserable amount of what rental is paid seldom or ever coming at all into the exchequer. In twenty-six years only 234,000*l.* reached the treasury, the remaining balance

of 14,000,000*l.* having been expended in salaries, pensions, the management that we have seen, and on royal parks and palaces.

Oh, John Bull, John Bull! what a bull-headed ass art thou!

Disgraceful, however, as is this particular view of aristocratic spoliation, disgraceful to the whole nation, in that it has so neglected its affairs as to allow itself thus to be plundered of its property, and the burthen of taxation thrown on itself to supply the place of that seized on, as in a riotous scramble, by peers and placemen, there is still another scene of spoliation that is still more so. It is *the robbery of the widow and the orphan*. I allude to the vast mass of property bequeathed to

PUBLIC CHARITIES.

Till Lord Brougham commenced a parliamentary inquiry into the condition of these public charities, the public seemed to have lost all sight of, and all care for them. Not so the hawk-eyed aristocracy! *They* have ever had their eyes open to spy out and seize all property of any kind that they possibly could, and when Brougham turned the eyes of the nation on the charity property, it saw, with astonishment, that the men who devoured widows' houses, and robbed the orphan, were exclusively *the aristocracy* and *the clergy*, a beloved section of it! Lord Brougham, then plain Henry, with that restless, volatile, and inconsequent disposition which has increasingly marked his character, pointed out the evil and left it. Had he pressed from year to year for a real reform of this property, that reform must have been achieved, and a property capable of furnishing not only vast capacity of comfort to the old and helpless, but also of education for the mass, would have been wrested from the harpy hands in which it still lies. This is a duty, however, which the British public still owes to itself, and it is to be hoped will yet set itself to perform. Public opinion is now every day acquiring greater weight; the nation is demanding a more general education of the people. Is there no public man who will undertake this great cause, and will earn for himself the gratitude of the nation by restoring this enormous property of upwards of nineteen millions and a half to its legitimate purposes of popular comfort and enlightenment?

Enough has been done by Brougham to show that the aristocracy has also taken possession of *this* property. Brougham estimated the real revenues of charity foundations at not less than *two millions* per annum. The returns of these, however, reach only 784,178*l.* per annum. Spackman gives the particulars in the following table:—

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PUBLIC CHARITIES

reported upon by the commissioners, and included in the two digests of 1832 and 1835.

				£	s.	d.
278,497 <i>a</i> . 2 <i>r</i> . 11 <i>p</i> .	Land producing an annual rental of			540,565	14	9
15,797	houses and cottages			56,963	1	0
£3,060,684	17	6	Three per cent. stock	} producing annually	150,649	9 3
154,247	5	1	Three and half ditto			
291,981	2	0	Four ditto			
81,031	13	0	Five ditto			
63,041	13	4	Bank and India stock			
782,611	19	7	Mortgages, personal and turnpike			
£4,433,598	10	6	Total annual income	£784,178	5	0

which, valued at 4 per cent., would make the fee-simple of the property held in trust for charitable purposes amount to

£19,604,150 0 0

APPLICATION OF THE ABOVE.

To Endowed Schools	£180,309	12	5
To Education not in Endowed Schools	16,938	17	5
Total for Education	197,248	9	10
" other purposes	491,536	3	4
" Chartered Companies	59,393	11	10
Total	£748,178	5	0

Imagine two millions a-year devoted to the comfort of the *aged poor*, and the education of the *young*. Or imagine the capital of 19,604,150*l.*, which Spackman estimates the property to be worth, well managed, and the income applied to these purposes, and what a mighty engine of public happiness and public enlightenment should we here possess!

And why do we not possess it? and who does possess it? and how is it employed? "From the tenure of charitable endowments, the clergy have almost entire possession of this immense fund. In England and Wales, according to the returns under the Gilbert Act, there are 3898 *school* charities, of which the clergy enjoy the exclusive emolument; and in the remaining charities they largely participate as trustees, visitors, or in other capacities. The pious credulity of our ancestors induced them to place implicit reliance on the clergy, little foreseeing how their confidence would be abused. Three-fourths of charitable property were thus placed at the mercy of

ecclesiastics, and the inquiries we refer to have shown that the worst abuses have been found under their management. The school of Pocklington, in Yorkshire, was a flagrant instance, in which a member of the Established church was receiving a snug income of 900*l.* a-year for teaching *one* scholar. *A right reverend prelate*, who had been left in *trust*, and his family, had appropriated the funds of the Mere and Spital charities. The grammar schools in almost every town have become mere sinecures, seldom having more than two or three foundation scholars; and the buildings, previously intended for the accommodation of *poor scholars*, have been perverted into boarding and day-schools for the emolument of their clerical masters. Bath and Bristol, Birmingham and Wolverhampton, Ripon and Preston, are striking examples of this sort of abuse and perversion. In the principal foundations of the metropolis and neighbourhood, in the Charter House, Christ's Hospital, the great schools of Westminster, St. Paul's, Harrow, Rugby, and the Gresham Lectures, they derive great advantages as wardens, visitors, provosts, high masters, senior masters, ushers, lecturers, and assistants. Many of these offices are held by *pluralists*, who are also *dignitaries*; and yield salaries of 800*l.* a-year, besides allowances for house-rent, vegetables, and linen, and large pensions of a *thousand a-year*, or so, on retirement. The present head-master of the Charter House, and the late and present master of St. Paul's school, are examples of this sort of monopoly. In the colleges of Eton and Westminster, again, the established clergy have a nice patrimony. The government of these foundations is vested in a certain number of *reverend* fellows, and a provost, who is a *reverend* also. The value of a fellowship, including allowances of coals, candles, and gown, is about a thousand a-year; and a provostship, in good years, has netted 2,500*l.*; besides which the fellows generally help themselves to a good fat living or two, which are in the gift of the colleges.*

So far the editor of the Extraordinary Black Book. But the fact is, that you can scarcely go into town or village where one of these old bequests is not perverted from the intention of the founder—to *educate the poor*—to the personal benefit of the clergy. The clergy are, however, but a branch of the aristocracy, and through this source get into these things. Again, the hospitals and alms-houses are often directly in the hands of the *lay* aristocracy, and are just as outrageously usurped. Even where there is an ostensible attention to the will of the founder, the increase

*. Evidence of Dr. Goodall; third report of Education Committee.

in the value of the property has been totally winked at, and the meagrest literal observance of it maintained. Thus, at the hospital of St. Cross, Winchester, which was established in the reign of king Stephen, and formerly maintained in the house *seventy persons*, clergy and laity, besides *a hundred* out-members, who received their daily meat and drink; and on the anniversary of the founder, *three hundred*; there are now maintained only *thirteen* poor brethren, who receive, besides *very small beer*, five small loaves of twenty-two ounces each in six days, and a pound of meat *per diem* per man; yet the annual income is said to be 6,000*l.* And where does it go? into the pocket of the master, Earl Stanhope! Why so! Why is not the hospital extended, and the poor benefited in proportion? For the very same reason that all this class of property is absorbed—the aristocracy have taken possession of it.

All attempts at a better application of this property, an application more adapted to the spirit and needs of the times, have been resisted on the pious plea that the wills of the testators cannot be violated. Poor innocent consciences! honest thieves! pious rogues! The wills of the testators! Why, they violate them every one, and that every day. Are the *orphan poor* educated in king Edward's schools? Is Latin grammar taught even to the *number* specified by those wills, in almost every one of those schools? Are the numbers of poor people lodged, fed, and clothed by the Spital funds? The whole is the very worst species of all imaginable humbug, because it is that which cheats the weak, robs the widow and fatherless, grinds the faces of the poor, and prohibits that diffusion of knowledge amongst the people which was intended. Poor, canting creatures, they are obliged to rob and swindle, devour widows' houses, and maintain all the ignorance and darkness they can, because they dare not break a syllable of the ancient founders' wills, who, oddly enough, desired to spread by those wills, light and knowledge. But when it has suited this same aristocracy to set aside wills of founders, it has been done at once and without ceremony. The great mass of church property in this country, for what purposes was it bequeathed? It was bequeathed by *catholic* founders for *particular* purposes. Were those purposes held sacred at the Reformation, when king and nobles yearned to lay hold of this property? Not for a moment. An act of council or of parliament set aside forthwith all scruples and all obstacles. Much of this property was specially left for prayers, perpetual prayers for the founders' souls! Can anything be dearer to men than their own souls? Yet those wills were treated with no more respect than so many scurvy ballads. They were set aside without a single feeling

of remorse, and our aristocracy now live and cherish their *bodies* upon this very property that was left to all time for the good of the *souls* of very different families. Henry VII. and Henry VIII. left property of more than eight hundred a-year in their time, at Windsor, for masses for their souls, and the souls of their parents and wives, which property now must be worth many thousands a-year. Was any regard paid to even those *royal wills*? Are masses yet sung there for those monarchs' souls? No! And if their wills are not to be strictly abided by, why are those of the founders of hospitals and schools? Wills are wills, and may be set aside or not. If in one case they can be voided at the pleasure of rulers, so in another; and *an act of a truly reformed parliament* would speedily convert all the charity property in the country to its legitimate purposes,—*comfort and sustenance for the aged poor, and general education for the young.*

CHAPTER XXIV.

IRELAND AND THE COLONIES.

THUS we have taken a survey of almost all imaginable property in this kingdom, and we find that the aristocracy has seized upon it by hook or by crook. However sacred to God or man; to state or church; to religion or the poor; to the solace of body and soul, of the aged or ignorant; for whatever purpose it had been given, or by whomsoever; in words or testaments however solemn, on occasions however great; by whatever noble actions it had been wrung from the grasp of former oppressors; to whatever noble objects it was devoted;—they have broken through all bonds, however holy, to come at it; they have scorned all fears, however salutary; and have snatched, with remorseless hands, that glorious portion laid on the altar of the country, by patriotism and religion; and applied that to their daily paltry needs, and their tinsel, beggars' opera splendour, which should have become the food of political independence and national greatness, and have raised into the light of knowledge and of renown millions of resplendent souls.

Oh! what numbers of these souls, ay, any one of them worth more than the whole herd of their Epicurean sty, have, through their thefts, their frauds, and their oppressions, gone in groans and tears through the narrow places of the world, into that land

of oblivion, where the perished dead and the souls forgotten still live to lift up their heads and hands in one fiery and inextinguishable prayer for vengeance and redress.

How many such souls have been lost to themselves, to their country, and mankind, through this great wrong! How many have writhed darkly, as in the very mud of the morasses of life, half-conscious of their capabilities, and wholly conscious of their misery, who, had the funds destined by pious ancestors to their use not been absorbed by the aristocratic vampyres, would have come forth Miltons, Newtons, Bacons, Hampdens, or Fox's, or statesmen of a still higher and more effective school, who should have set the fame of their country on the grateful heart of the world, and poured from this island-temple of God, his laws, his love, and civilization, round the globe, in an ocean greater and more beneficial than that of its waters. What poets now like Burns, but without the blight which aristocratic pride and contumely cast upon him, would have been singing the sublimest truths to thousands of ears that now, wrapped in the clammy clay of indigence, shall never open to any sounds but curses and cries for bread! What statesmen and philanthropists, warmed to new life, and awakened to new perceptions by genius and by mind, that the fostering beams of ancient and well-applied bounties had called out of the limbo and wastes of life to a broad sun-bright knowledge of themselves and the universe, would now be acting for the common family of England in the spirit of diviner men! With what a splendour of heavenly radiance, with what gems and gold of purest glory, would these have already surrounded the beautiful crown of our common country! and what millions of spirits—dead—dead—for ever dead to light and hope and comfort, would now be living over our broad lands, in our cities, and on our mountains, a life of dignified happiness, and breathing fervent wishes,—doing purest deeds for the welfare of the world at large and of coming times!

Such might have been, and such would have been the fruits of our wealth, well directed. But what now have we reaped instead? Wars, bloodshed, deaths and miseries in mountainous heaps; debt, poverty, ignorance, crime, and overflowing despair. Our civilization has been retarded, our rightful glory has been suppressed, our principles have been corrupted, our brethren have been made miserable, and we have still to undo the evil of our deeds, before we can begin that work of social and universal improvement which God and the age of the world demand of us. And now, in our own immediate task, in our own portion of this combat with the old giants of caste and voluptuous greed, we must advance yet a step farther into the melancholy field.

We have traversed, we have said, our island in all directions, and found that the aristocracy have seized on all public property and right. If we extend our search to the farthest bounds of our transmarine empire, we shall find it the same. Our colonies are as much the usurped property of the aristocracy as our native soil. They and their sons occupy all their good offices, their wealth, and their best things. By their greed and maladministration they have reduced one of the vastest to famine and difficulty; by their despotism and imbecility, they have lost us one of the noblest. But before we proceed so far, there is another and more proximate scene of their misdeeds that we must take a glance at, and that is—Ireland.

Ireland, in the very beginning of our connexion with her, was an aristocratic conquest and booty. Strongbow, Earl of Strighul, in the reign of Henry II., with his adherents, went over thither, slew, and took possession. From that hour to this, that fair island has been treated as a conquered country. At the time of the Reformation under Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, at the time of the Commonwealth, at the time of the Revolution in 1688,—in short, at all times when the internal distractions of England have given the oppressed Irish a hope of freeing themselves from the galling yoke of the British, they have risen to assert their right to their own soil and to their freedom; and by our superior might and unmitigated cruelty, have been rebranded by the fires of their blazing huts, and rebaptized in their own blood, as our serfs and slaves. We have robbed them of their lands, of their churches, of the government of their towns and country; we have sent over swarms of aristocrats to take possession of the estates of their ancient families; and hordes of parsons to occupy their churches and devour the tithes which had been given by their fathers for the maintainance of their own religion. And these heretic parsons,—heretic in the sight of the natives, and these English aristocrats, and these Scotch and English intruders, styled colonists, have lived and rioted before their eyes on the lands of their ancestors, and the dying bequests of the ancient saints, as sacred and perpetual funds for the good of their own souls, of the souls of the poor, and of the whole people. From age to age they have been insulted, trodden on, thrust out of their own soil and their own offices; and taunted with being "alien in blood, in language, and religion!"

Great God! what business had we there? What business had we with their lands, their churches, and their endowments? If we went as Christians to convert them, were violence and robbery and injustice the means? If we went to rule them, was it to be only by insult and slaughter? If we went to bind Green

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Erin to Britannia as a sister, was it to be only as an erring sister, whose fortune is to be flung into the streets, and frowned on in her misery? In whatever character we *pretended* to go there, our eyes full of vengeance, and our hands full of chains and plunder, betrayed us to the whole wide world as thieves and hypocrites.

Was there any people on earth deserving the name of a people, and of making a portion of the great British realm, who could endure this, and not glow with resentment, and cherish thoughts of blood and death, and freedom? From age to age, these things have been in Ireland the origin of insurrections, massacres, and violent treadings down again. But still Ireland had its own parliament, and through this a voice of freedom, and of discontent with a condition in which contentment were base and unmanly, might speak. It must be put down. And how was this done? And how was THE UNION planned and effected? We have the record of the transaction and the means.

In 1799, the proposal of the Union was rejected by an overwhelming majority. In 1800 it was carried by a majority of 90. But what were the means employed by the English government to produce the change? O'Connell in his speech before the Dublin corporation in 1843, declared that he had it on the authority of Bushe and Plunket, and on that of the report of the committee of the Irish House of Commons in 1798, to inquire into the causes of that event; that not only had the great Irish rebellion been fomented by the English government, as preparatory to their plan of urging a union; but the parliamentary papers published since then," he added, "disclosed the astounding fact, that *one million two hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds* were paid in the purchase of boroughs, and that more than a *million* had been expended in mere bribes. Bribery was unconcealed. The terms of the purchase were quite familiar in those days. The price of a single vote was 8000*l.* in money, or an appointment to an office with two thousand a-year if the parties did not chose to take ready money. Some got both for their votes; and no less than *twenty peerages, ten bishoprics, one chief-justiceship, and six puisne judgeships*, were given as the price of votes for the Union. Add to this the officers who were appointed to the revenue, the colonels appointed to the army, the commanders and captains appointed to vessels in the navy, in recompense for Union votes. Spite of this, the first attempt to carry the Union failed; Castlereagh then changed his hand, and some of those who would not take money for their votes consented to sell their seats. These seats were filled with the tools of government, and the consequence was—a majority."

We have already shown what we paid for these votes, and are still paying. In a word, Ireland was forced into the union by the same means that the liberties of England had been ruined by the public money and the bribes of elevation to the rank—of aristocrats. That the sense of Ireland was against the measure, Lord Grey showed in 1800. Twenty-seven counties, he said, had petitioned against the measure, there were 707,000 who petitioned against the measure, and only 3000 for it. Grattan also described the measures for carrying the Union thus :—"Half a million or more was expended some years ago to break an opposition; the same, or a greater sum may be necessary now; *that* Lord Castlereagh has said himself, in the most extensive sense of bribery and corruption. The threat was proceeded on; the peerage sold; the caittiffs of corruption were everywhere—in the lobby, in the streets, on the steps, and at the doors of every parliamentary leader, offering titles to some, offices to others, corruption to all."

The names and *prices* of all the purchased members of the Irish Parliament were preserved in the Irish Red and Black lists. A selection of a few of these may be edifying :—

J. Bingham, created a peer, Lord Clanmorris; got 8000*l.* for two seats; and 15,000*l.* compensation for Tuam. First offered himself for sale to the Anti-Unionists.

Joseph H. Blake, created a peer; Lord Wallscourt.

Sir J. G. Blackwood, created a peer; Lord Dufferin.

Sir John Blaquiere, created a peer; Lord de Blaquiere, with offices and pensions.

Lord Boyle, son of Lord Shannon; father and son got an *immense* sum of money for their seats and boroughs; 15,000*l.* for each.

Charles H. Coote, a peerage; Lord Castlecoote; a regiment; patronage of Queen's County, and 7500*l.* in cash.

James Cuffe; his father made Lord Tyrawley.

Lord Fitzgerald, a pension and a peerage.

Luke Fox; made judge of Common Pleas.

William Fortescue; pension of 3,000*l.* a-year.

J. Galbraith; a baronetage.

Richard Hare; made Lord Ennismore, with patronage.

Colonel B. Heneker; a regiment, and 3500*l.* a-year for his seat.

Hon. J. Hutchinson; made Lord Hutchinson, and a general.

Hugh Howard; made Postmaster-General.

William Handcock; an extraordinary instance. He made and sang songs *against* the Union in 1799, at a public dinner; and made and sang songs *for* it in 1800; for which he got a peerage, as Lord Castlemaine; a title which seems to have been selected as a badge of particular infamy, having been before given by Charles II. to one Palmer, for the debauchery of his wife.

Hon. G. Jocelyn; promotion in the army, and his brother bishop of Lismore.

William Johnson, returned, as he himself said, "by Lord Castlereagh to parliament, to put an end to it;" a judgeship.

Right Honourable H. Langrishe, got 15,000*l.* for his patronage of Knocktopher, and a commissionership of revenue.

T. Lingray, 1,500*l.*, and a commissionership of stamps.

T. Lindsay, junr.; 1,500*l.*, and usher at the Castle.

J. Longfield, made a peer; Lord Longueville.

Lord Loftus; 30,000*l.* for boroughs, and made an English marquis.

H. D. Massey; 4,000*l.* cash.

Right Honourable Lodge Morris; a peer.

Sir R. Musgrave; made receiver of Customs, with 1,200*l.* a-year.

James McClelland; baron of Exchequer.

Sir W. G. Newcomen; bought, and a peerage for his wife.

H. F. Prittie; made Lord Dunalley.

Sir Richard Quin; a peerage.

Hon. H. Skeffington; made clerk of Paper Office at the Castle, and 7,500*l.* for his patronage.

H. M. Sandford; made Lord Mount Sandford

John Stewart; Attorney-General and a baronet.

Hon. B. Stratford; 7,500*l.* as half compensation for Baltinglass.

Hon. J. Stratford; 7,500*l.* for the other half of Baltinglass, and paymaster of foreign troops, with 1,300*l.* a-year.

Right. Hon. J. Toler; a peerage, and chief-justice.

Hon. R. Trench; made a peer and ambassador.

This is a mere fragment of a list of 140 persons thus bought up. Amongst the most prominent pickings were those of

Lord Shannon, for his patronage in the Commons	£45,000
The Marquis of Ely	45,000
Lord Clanmorris	45,000
Lord Belvidere	45,000
Sir Hercules Langrishe	45,000

The following frightful table presents also a solemn warning against the admission of too many lawyers into parliament. It is the catalogue of those who sold their country at the Union, and at what rate:—

LIST OF BARRISTERS WHO SUPPORTED THE UNION, AND THEIR
RESPECTIVE REWARDS.

	Per ann.
1. Mr. Charles Osborne, appointed a judge of the King's Bench	£3,300
2. Mr. Saint John Daly, ditto	3,300
3. Mr. William Smith, appointed baron of the Exchequer	3,300
4. Mr. McClelland, ditto	3,300
5. Mr. Robt. Johnson, appointed judge of Common Pleas	3,300

	Per ann.
6. Mr. William Johnson, appointed judge of Common Pleas	£3,300
7. Mr. Torrens, ditto	3,300
8. Mr. Vandeleur, appointed a judge of Queen's Bench	3,300
9. Mr. Thomas Maunsell, a county judge	600
10. Mr. William Turner, ditto	600
11. Mr. John Scholes, ditto	600
12. Mr. Thomas Vickers, ditto	600
13. Mr. John Homan, ditto	600
14. Mr. Thomas Grady, ditto	600
15. Mr. John Dwyer, ditto	600
16. Mr. George Leslie, ditto	600
17. Mr. Thomas Scott, ditto	600
18. Mr. Henry Brook, ditto	600
19. Mr. James Geraghty, ditto	600
20. Mr. Richard Sharkey, ditto	600
21. Mr. William Stokes, ditto	600
22. Mr. William Roper, ditto	600
23. Mr. C. Garnett, ditto	600
24. Mr. Jemison, a commissioner for the distribution of one mil- lion and half Union compensation !	1,200
25. Mr. Fitzgibbon Henchy, commissioner of bankrupts	400
26. Mr. J. Keller, officer in the Court of Chancery	500
27. Mr. P. W. Fortescue, M.P., a <i>secret</i> pension	400
28. Mr. W. Longfield, an officer in the Custom House	500
29. Mr. Arthur Brown, commission of inspector	800
30. Mr. Edward Stanley, ditto	800
31. Mr. Charles Ormsby, counsel to commissioners' value . . .	5,000
32. Mr. William Knott, M.P., commissioner of appeals	800
33. Mr. Henry Deane Grady, counsel to commissioners' value . .	5,000
34. Mr. John Beresford, his father a title.	

If we cannot wonder at the discontent of the Irish at a Union brought about by such means, how much less when we hear Lord Plunkett, in 1799, speaking of Ireland as "A little island, with a population of four or five millions of people, hardy, gallant, and enthusiastic ; her revenues, her trade and manufactures, thriving beyond the hope or example of any other country of her extent ; within these few years advancing with a rapidity astonishing even to herself, and complaining of deficiency in no respect, but acknowledging and enjoying her prosperity :"—when you hear Chief Justice Bushe exclaiming, "By the Union, England seeks only a dominion which she has uniformly abused, and from the cessation of which, *you date all your prosperity* :—and Lord Clare asserting, in 1798, that "no nation had advanced in cultivation, in agriculture, in manufactures, with the same rapidity in the same period, as Ireland, from 1782 to 1798." And when to this, the discontented people present you with this

SYNOPTIC VIEW OF IRELAND!

LOOK ON THIS!
Before the Union.

Domestic legislation.
House of Peers.
House of Commons.
202 peers, 94 having houses in
Dublin.

300 commoners having houses in
Dublin.

Irish taxes in 1800, two millions
and a-half.

Advance from 1782, far greater than
that of Great Britain.

Foreign trade one million.

Balance for 17 years almost exclu-
sively in her favour.

Profitable exports increased.

To partial absentees, two millions.

5620 registered merchants in Dublin.

24,000 employed in the Liberty.

4000 looms in ditto.

100 woollen-merchants.

1500 looms at daily work in
Dingle (Kerry) expending 70,000*l.*
yearly.

In *Dublin* we had before the
Union 19 sugar-bakeries.

In *Cork* there were five sugar-
bakeries.

In *Waterford* there were five or
six ditto.

In *Currick-on-Suir* there were 7000
manufacturers, all earning a com-
fortable livelihood.

In *Kilkenny* 4000 blanket manu-
facturers.

In *Bandon* there were 6000 cotton
weavers.

We had no Poor-Laws: they were
not wanted.

Taxes repealed in England since
the peace, 47,214,338*l.*

THEN ON THIS!
Since the Union.

None.

None.

None.

202; only 28 representatives, 61 not
living *at all* in Ireland; 100 have
houses in London.

105 absent commoners; five occa-
sionally in Dublin.

Now six millions; with *amount of*
unacknowledged, six and a-half
millions.

Decline in the inverse ratio.

Now not half a million.

Balance almost every year since
against Ireland.

Profitable exports diminished.

To absolute absentees, five millions.

3000 now, nearly all bankrupt.

1000 now.

100 now.

Six now.

None now: Linen trade and Fishing
nearly extinguished.

We have not *one* now.

There is not one now.

There is not one now.

There are now but seven.

There are not five there now.

There are not one hundred there
now.

Now we have Poor-Laws, and
2,385,000 paupers.

Taxes repealed in Ireland since the
peace, 1,575,940*l.*

NOTE.—It would be impossible in so brief a statement as this to convey to the reader even an idea of the losses which Ireland has sustained, year by year, by the accursed Act of Union. For further information we refer him to the "*Repeal Manual*," by W. J. Battersby, Esq.

Here is a view of things which surely may excuse the cry of repeal on the part of the Irish people, and which ought to be answered by us, not by repeal, but by a ready concession of justice, an equality of national rights, and that not only for their benefit but ours, for true union is the strength of nations, and one common prosperity must be its result. At present, Ireland, having been sold by its aristocracy, is drained by it in the great rental vortex of London.

THE COLONIES.

If we were to enter on this single department of our subject with a design to go fully into the manner in which the aristocracy also possess the colonies, it would itself make a volume more bulky than we propose this to be. But what need of that? Does not every one know that that is the case? Have we not a Governor-General of India with his 25,000*l.* a-year? Our Governor of British North America with 7,000*l.*? Our Governor of Australia with 5,000*l.*? of Nova Scotia with 3,500*l.*? of South Africa with 5,000*l.*? Gibraltar with 4,000*l.*? of Newfoundland with 3,000*l.*? of the Mauritius with 7,000*l.*? Governor of Sierra Leone with 2,000*l.*? of Ceylon with 8,500*l.*? of British Guiana with 5,000*l.*? Provost Marshal of the same with 1,731*l.*? Government Secretary with 1,500*l.*? Chief Justice with 2,500*l.*? Vendue master with 1,160*l.*? Governor of Tobago with 1,300*l.*? of Trinidad with 3,500*l.*? of St. Vincent with 1,266*l.*? of Barbadoes with 4,000*l.*? of St. Christopher's with 1,420*l.*? of Dominica with 1,300*l.*? of Antigua with 3,202*l.*? of the Bahamas with 2,240*l.*? of St. Lucia with 1,200*l.*? of Bermuda with 3,000*l.*? of Jamaica with 8,000*l.*? with its Bishop 4,000*l.*? Archdeacon 2,000*l.*? Chief Justice 3,000*l.*? Assistant Judge 2,000*l.*? Island Secretary, 2,220*l.*? Provost Marshal General 2,470*l.*? Receiver General 3,000*l.*? Registrar 1,200*l.*? and Clerk of the Inferior Court 2,800*l.*? &c., &c.

And all these with their secretaries, registrars, judges, attornies-general, agents, secretaries of council, remembrancers of courts of Exchequer, clerks of common pleas, presidents, accountants to government boards, and auditors and receivers to those courts, superintendents, as of the cinnamon plantations with 1,688*l.*; king's receiver, as in Demerara, 2,000*l.*; provost marshal, as in Jamaica with 2,470*l.*; besides bishops, commodores-in-chief, and admirals in these stations, and all their inferior officers; and then all the *retired* judges, collectors, registrars, receivers, accountants, &c., &c., over again; and then all the minor posts and agencies, with profitable pickings, contracts, and speculations in lands, &c. The colonies are one immense source of patronage and income to the aristocracy, such as that

of no other country ever possessed, the direct value being said to amount to no less than two or three millions a year.

We have alluded to two of our chief colonial possessions, one of which the aristocracy have lost us, the other of which it is endangering the loss of—the United States of North America, and India. To these we will chiefly, for brevity's sake, confine our remarks:

As the people have done by the trade and arts of the nation, so have they done by the colonies. They have been their great founders and builders up. Government has seldom cared much for these in their infancy, but as soon as the difficulties, hazard and hardships of the first settlement are well over, it generally steps in, and sends the colony a good stock of aristocratic governors, tax-collectors, judges, and so on, to enjoy as many posts as can possibly be found. This was especially the case with the United States of America. Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Humphrey Gilbert sent out their private troops of adventurers to colonize Virginia. It was with incredible hardships, and after repeated failures that they accomplished the object. The Puritans, driven by savage religious persecution from England, went out and peopled New England. Penn and his persecuted Quakers settled Pennsylvania; Lord Baltimore and his persecuted catholics, Maryland, and so on. On the commencement of the American war, when Charles Townsend ventured to say that the Americans were ungrateful, being "children planted by our care, and nourished by our indulgence," Colonel Barré, who had been beyond the Atlantic, and knew the country and the people well, burst forth:—"They planted by your care!—No! your oppression planted them in America. They fled from your tyranny to a then uncultivated and inhospitable wilderness, exposed to all the hardships to which human nature is liable. They nourished by your indulgence!—No! *they grew by your neglect of them.* Your care was displayed as soon as you began to care about them, in sending persons to rule them who were the deputies of deputies of ministers,—men whose behaviour on many occasions has caused the blood of those sons of liberty to recoil within them;—men who have been promoted to the highest seats of justice in that country in order to escape being brought to the bar of a court of justice in their own!"

These few words contain but a too just description of the growth and history of our colonies. If our government did not, however, raise the American colonies by their personal care, they lost them by aristocratic imbecility and despotism. In 1764 they determined to try the same system of taxation on

* Cavendish's Debates.

this people that they had so completely established at home—taxation without representation. The high-spirited Americans disdained to do as the English people had done,—they resisted the tyrannous attempt, and the blind and incensed aristocracy instantly flew to arms. This was one of the most important and characteristic contests which the world had seen. It was a direct trial of strength between ARISTOCRACY and DEMOCRACY, and never was the decision more complete, or the inherent qualities of both powers more fully demonstrated. We blush for our country as we read it, but it is not because we lost America, for that must one day have separated itself from our arbitrary and extravagant government; and the less, because we were only beaten by our own blood, backed by all the great powers of Europe. But what we blush for is, that our great country should have been thus exposed to loss, to vast expenditure, and to humiliation before all the world, by an effeminate, stupid, and imbecile class of men, who, arrayed in fine clothes and fine titles, stood forth to the peopled earth as the leading men of our realm, and thus brought shame on the name of England.

It was not the *people* of England that were weak and deficient on the occasion. Search the whole contest over, from beginning to end, and we may challenge any one to point out a single occasion on which the British troops did not fight with their brilliant and universal valour. Well did these troops deserve the splendid eulogium of Lord Chatham—"No man thinks more highly of them than I do. I love and honour the British troops; I acknowledge their virtues and their valour; I know that they can achieve anything but impossibilities." But commanded, provided, guided, and sacrificed as they were, both in the field and from home, conquest in America was the wildest impossibility for them. They had to contend against men shirtless and shoeless; fed only with the casual product often of flying foraging parties, and shivering through the winter in rude forest huts, and without blankets; but they were men with English blood in their veins, and English sentiments in their souls, and they fought for hearth and home, wives, children, country, and that possession which gives its charm and glory to all these—liberty! while our brave fellows were compelled to fight on in a bad cause, a cause hateful to the sound-hearted Englishman,—that of despotism, and under the command of the most pitiful crew of aristocratic imbeciles that ever were doomed by God to fling away a nation.

There was one man who had the use of his eyes and his intellect, and he laid down the only plan by which the colonies might have been reduced, and that at a far less expense than the 136 millions which it cost us to lose the United States. Lord Bar-

rington declared that, to conquer America you must refrain from marching into the country, but blockade the ports, seize the large towns on the coast, where they chiefly lay, and with the fleet cut off carefully all communication with Europe. The Americans, he wrote to Lord North, the minister, "*may be reduced by the fleet, but never can by the army!*" But from the first moment to the last, counsel was wasted on those blind high-feeders, and the whole war was a most lamentable and ignominious career of drivelling incapacity in the commanders, by which all the wealth of England and the valour and lives of the soldiers were thrown away. It is almost more than mortal patience can endure to pass this sad scene of our history in review. The Howes, Clintons, and Gages were always lying still when they should have been in action, and committing only blunders when they moved. They allowed the enemy to take possession of and fortify Bunker's hill before their faces; their lake forts were found with scarcely a man in them, and such as were there were mostly drunk and were taken by the enemy. The troops under Gage, instead of following up the blow given to the Americans at Bunker's hill, suffered themselves to be blockaded in Boston by Washington's army—an army with scarcely any arms or ammunition, and lay, themselves suffering severe want of fresh provisions and forage for the horses, playing "God save the King," while the Americans replied to them with "Yankee Doodle,"—when by one sally they might have dispersed the whole living rabble in a moment. The same folly was repeated at New York. The two Howes, Admiral and General, never could contrive to make their forces act together, or Washington's army might have been at once taken and destroyed. "Nothing," says the historian, "but a miserable negligence, slowness, and stupidity, could possibly have saved Washington's forces." In 1776, Lord Cornwallis in like manner suffered Washington's army to get over the Delaware at Trenton, and instead of pursuing them when they were in the most wretched condition, worn out in body and spirit, and wanted only one smart assault to put them to irrecoverable flight, he snugly sate down to winter quarters. The whole war was only a continuation of such conduct. In 1777 General Burgoyne, a brave man, by following in opposition to his better judgment, the impracticable orders sent from home, sacrificed our fine army of 7,000 men in the woods of New York, and made his miserable surrender at Saratoga. But spite of this terrible disaster, General Howe slept on; and the following winter, while Washington lay encamped at Valley Forge, within twenty-five miles of Philadelphia, "he ate his meat," says Knight, "and drank his wine, and played his game at cards in Philadelphia,

in seeming forgetfulness of there being such a place in his neighbourhood as Valley Forge." The same writer says that "an active enemy would, in the commencement of the winter, neither have allowed Washington time to dig his entrenchments or construct his huts; and defeat in such a situation must have been attended with the most fatal consequences." But not only did he suffer him to make his camp, but quietly to enjoy it all winter when the Schuylkil was frozen over, and one well-laid and executed movement would have taken the whole American army and its general.

The description of the two armies and two generals at this time is the most extraordinary thing in all modern warfare, and places in the most glaring light the fatal mischief to a nation of aristocratic command. The army of Washington was in the most deplorable condition, and reduced to a few thousands by consequent desertion. Many of the officers threw up their commissions in disgust, and those who remained were penniless and in rags. There was republican equality enough: the officers were as ragged and as famished as the men. Lafayette, who saw them, says—"The unfortunate soldiers were in want of everything; they had neither coats nor hats, shirts nor shoes. Their legs and feet froze till they became black, and it was often necessary to amputate them. From want of money the officers could obtain neither provisions nor any means of transport; the colonels were often reduced to two rations, and sometimes to one. The army frequently was whole days without any provisions whatever."

And what was General Howe doing? He heard all this from the continual deserters, and might by one blow have finished the war. But that was such a thing as never could enter the head of a luxurious, self-indulgent aristocrat. He lay still and warm in Philadelphia, and feasted, gamed, and rioted till the sober citizens beheld the English *defenders* with horror. This is Steadman's account of that memorable winter of 1778:—

"A want of discipline and proper subordination pervaded the whole army; and if disease and sickness thinned the American army encamped at Valley Forge, indolence and luxury perhaps did no less injury to the British troops at Philadelphia. During the winter, a very unfortunate inattention was shown to the feelings of the inhabitants, whose satisfaction should have been vigilantly consulted, both from gratitude and from interest. They experienced many of the horrors of civil war. The soldiers insulted and plundered them; and their houses were occupied as barracks, without any compensation. Some of the first families were compelled to receive into their habitations indi-

vidual officers, who were indecent enough to introduce their mistresses into the mansions of their hospitable entertainers, many of whom were Quakers. Gaming of every species was permitted, and even sanctioned, and this vice not only debauched the mind, but, by sedentary confinement and the want of seasonable repose, enervated the body."

Wherever our army lay this was the state of things. Could anything but disgrace and defeat succeed? At this moment all writers, American or English, agree that Howe might have swept the enemy from Valley Forge, "as a swarm of half-frozen flies are swept from a dead wall." To the end of the war it was the same, and the result is too well known—America was lost by the aristocracy of England, stupified by luxury, and overloaded with national plunder. Against the ragged array and active wits of democracy it had no chance!

INDIA.

This glorious peninsula presents another and still more deplorable example of aristocratic mischief. The foundation of our stedfast empire over this great and magnificent country may be said to have been laid by the plans and victories of Mr. Robert Clive, the son of a country clergyman, in 1757 and succeeding years. Our territories there now extend over more than a million of square miles of the richest portion of the earth, and over from one hundred to one hundred and forty millions of people. By a wise and intelligent system of government, by a system such as the Romans would have introduced, this grand peninsula would now be full of wealth, of high cultivation, of splendid public works, and would have poured wealth and work for our manufacturing population into this country in such a degree that we should have heard of no manufacturing distress, nor of a national debt. But from the hour that Clive and his coadjutors came into the discovery of the vast treasures of the native princes, when he himself obtained, besides his jaghire of 30,000*l.* per annum, about 300,000*l.*, and he and his fellows altogether, between 1759 and 1763, no less than 5,940,498*l.* exclusive of this said jaghire, the cupidity of the aristocracy became excited to the highest degree; and from that period to the present, India has been one scene of flights of aristocratic locusts, of fighting, plundering, oppression, and extortion of the natives. We will not go into these things; they are fully and faithfully written in Mills' "History of British India;" in Howitt's "Colonization and Christianity;" and, above all, in the letters of the Honourable Frederick Shore, brother of Lord Teignmouth, a man who passed through all offices—from a clerk to that of a judge

—and saw much of the system and working of things in many parts of India. He published his letters originally in the India papers, that any one on the spot might challenge their truth ; and, since his death, they have been reprinted in England. The scene which that work opens up is the most extraordinary, and demands the attention of every lover of his country and his species. It fully accounts for the strange facts, that India is now drained of its wealth ; that its public works, especially the tanks, which contributed by their waters to maintain its fertility, are fallen to decay ; that one-third of the country is a jungle inhabited by tigers, who pay no taxes ; that its people are reduced to the utmost wretchedness, and are often, when a crop fails, swept away by half a million at once by famine and its pendent, pestilence, as in 1770, and again in 1838-9. To such a degree is this reduction of the wealth and cultivation of India carried, that while others of our colonies pay taxes to the amount of a pound or thirty shillings per head, India pays only four shillings.

At the renewal of its charter in 1834, its income was about *twenty millions*, its debt about *forty millions*. Since then its income has gradually fallen to about *seventeen millions*, and its debt we hear now whispered to be about *seventy millions*. Such have been the effects of exhausted fields and physical energies on the one hand, and of wars, especially that of Afghanistan, on the other. It requires no conjurer, much less a very profound arithmetician, to perceive that at this rate we need be under no apprehension of Russia, for a very few years will take India out of our hands by mere financial force. We rejoice to understand that the East India Company is now well aware of this, and has commenced a new career ; that it is resolved to put a stop to the wars of aggression ; to maintain the integrity of the empire as it now stands ; and to lend all its energies to employ the vast population in the cultivation of the ground. The success which has attended this attempt, the increase in one year of the import and export duties of the port of Calcutta alone in 1842, owing to the produce of their plantations, and the demand of the labourers in them for British manufactures, to the amount of *two and a half millions sterling*, has determined them to proceed, having thus a certain prospect of not only rendering their territory most prolific in revenue, but at once of employing all their labouring population, and the labouring population of England to supply them again with clothing.

This opens up a new and more magnificent prospect for Great Britain, if steadily carried out, than ever yet dawned upon her, making her, if necessary, independent of the commerce of the whole world beside. But, to insure this, the *aristocratic*

harp thirst of plunder and of blood must be steadily resisted. Our aristocratic government, through the Board of Control, keep up and exert a vast patronage in India. The patronage of the president of this board alone, independent of his salary of 5000*l.* a-year, is about *twenty-one* thousand pounds. But the whole aristocracy have an interest in keeping up wars in India, that their sons as officers, especially in these times of European peace, may find here both employment and promotion. This, then, the Company in its plans of peace and cultivation has to contend against; and few are they who are aware of the formidable nature of this power as it is exerted in this direction, and of the strange and unconstitutional legislative authority with which they have armed themselves for this purpose. How few are they who are aware that, while the East India Company has been blamed as the planners, authors, and movers of the fatal and atrocious invasion of Cabul, that the Directors of the Company only first, and to their great amazement, learned the outbreak of that war from the public Indian papers. So far from that war being one of their originating, it was most opposed to their present policy, and disastrous to their affairs. How then came this monstrous war about, and *who* then did originate it? To explain this, requires us to lay open a monstrous stretch of unconstitutional power on the part of our government—a monstrous stratagem for the maintenance of their aristocratic views in India, which it is wonderful could have escaped the notice and reprehension of the public. Let the reader mark well what follows.

In the last charter, granted in 1834, a clause was introduced, binding a secret committee of the East India Company, consisting of three persons only, the chairman, deputy chairman, and senior director, who are solemnly sworn to this work, to receive private despatches from the Board of Control, and without communicating them to a single individual besides themselves, to forward them to India, where the receivers are bound, *without question or appeal*, to enforce their immediate execution. By this inquisitorial system, this worse than Spanish or Venetian system of secret decrees, government has reserved to itself a direction of the affairs of India, freed from all constitutional or representative check, and reduced the India Company to a mere cat's-paw. By the sworn secrecy and implicit obedience of this mysterious triumvirate, the Company is made the unconscious instrument of measures most hostile to its own views, and most fatal to its best interests. It may at any hour become the medium of a secret order which may threaten the very destruction of its empire. Such was the case with the war of Cabul.

The aristocratic government at home planned and ordered it; and the unconscious Company was made at once to carry out a scheme so atrocious, so wicked and unprincipled, as well as destructive to its plans of civil economy, and to bear also the infamy of it. Awaking, therefore, to the tremendous nature of the secret powers thus introduced into their machinery by government, the Company determined to exercise also a power happily intrusted to them. Hence the recall of Lord Ellenborough, who, in obedience to aristocratic views at home, was not only running headlong over all their plans of pacific policy, but with his armies and elephants was treading under foot their cotton and sugar plantations. Hence, on the other hand, the favour and support which this warlike lord finds with the great martial duke, and the home government.

If the people of England, if *Young England*, or any other party or body wish to see our manufacturers employed, our commerce flourishing, and education and comfort spreading at home, they must fix their eyes steadily on India, and check any warlike aggression there, and strengthen the hands of the Company in the pursuit of peace and the growth of abundance. Nay, if they wish to prevent the destruction of our Indian empire altogether, they must call at once, loudly and boldly, for the extirpation of this arbitrary and un-English clause from the charter of the India Company. They must demand that this sending of secret despatches through a sworn and secret triumvirate shall cease. Till then there is for our tenure of India, or for its advance in prosperity, no security; for aristocracy still looks with wishful eyes in that direction, and mighty is its power. As it has sacrificed the national interests to its selfish views through all ages, it will continue to sacrifice them still; and it is notorious that from the first rise of our Indian power, bribery has never been wanting to bend ministers or parliament to its wishes. The very charter of the present Company was obtained by enormous bribes to men in power. Before the *glorious* Revolution, it seldom exceeded 1,200*l.* annually; but after it, it speedily advanced to 90,000*l.* annually. The Duke of Leeds, the minister in 1793, was impeached for a bribe of 50,000*l.*; and 10,000*l.* was said to be traced even to the pocket of the king.*

Let us be assured that aristocratic schemes will not be easily eluded. With the dreadful engine that they have now contrived to get into their hands for the maintenance of their class patronage in India—a patronage that is bound up with bloodshed, aggres-

* Macpherson's Annals, II. 652—662.

sion, and the destruction of commerce—they cannot be too closely watched; but the possession of India, and the prosperity of England, depend upon their defeat. Let us fix our eyes steadily on India—and on peace!

Such has been the history and effects of aristocratic management of colonial affairs in general. Of late years, government have begun to legislate for *young* colonies, and their proceedings have been disastrous enough. Adopting the Wakefieldian scheme of selling all colonial lands, on the pretext of sending over the necessary labourers, they have introduced the most ruinous spirit of speculation into Australia, as well as of official speculation and abuse; and the very existence, not only of these colonies, but of New Zealand, has been endangered. This also needs a vigilant public eye. But here we must pause. In a rapid survey, we have beheld how everything—crown, charter, church, House of Commons, crown lands, public charities, and even the vast extent of our own colonies, are engrossed and enjoyed by this mighty and all-grasping aristocracy. We have one little step further to advance, and to inquire, Who then are *in reality* these aristocrats who thus rule over and ruin us? And who are the people who thus submit patiently to be devoured?

CHAPTER XXV.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE PEERAGE.

"Not all that heralds rake from confined clay,
Nor florid prose, nor honied lies of rhyme,
Can blazon evil deeds, or consecrate a crime."

CHILDE HAROLD, c. i. p. 12.

"Almost the whole town are my kindred, but in particular, my Lord Turnabout, my Lord Time-server, my Lord Fair-speech; also Mr. Smooth-man, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Anything; and the parson of our parish, Mr. Two-Tongues, was my mother's own brother by father's side; and to tell you the truth, I am become a gentleman of good quality; yet my great-grandfather was but a waterman, looking one way and rowing another; and I got most of my estate by the same occupation."—MR. BYENDE, IN PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

If there be one thing more ominous than another in opening a book of the peerage, it is the queer look of the armorial escutcheons by which the aristocratic families are distinguished. Are

these meant to be characteristic? Are they meant to be emblems of the nature of aristocracy—of the origin, history, and merits of these people? Then surely the sooner the whole body of them were swept out of civilised society the better. Surely the heralds must have laughed in their sleeves as they designed and emblazoned aristocratic arms. Sly dogs they must have been, pretending a glory and perpetrating a satire. But in the satire what a truth! The whole emblazonment of aristocracy is one manifesto of savage barbarism, brute force, and propensity to robbery and plunder. What are these objects on their shields? Daggers, swords, lions' heads, dogs' heads, arrow-heads, boars' heads, cannon balls, clubs, with a medley of stars, moons, and unmeaning figures. What are the crests of these arms? Lascivious goats, rampant lions, fiery dragons, and griffins gone crazed; bulls' heads, block-heads, arms with uplifted daggers, beasts with daggers, and vultures tearing up helpless birds. What, again, are the supporters of these shields? What are the emblems of the powers by which they are maintained and upheld? The demonstration is deeply significant. They are the most singular assemblage of all that is fierce, savage, rampageous, villanous, lurking, treacherous, bloodthirsty, cruel, and bestial in bestial natures. They are infuriated lions, boars, and tigers; they are raging bulls, filthy goats, horrid hyenas, snarling dogs, drunken bears, and mad rams; they are foxes, wolves, panthers, everything that is creeping, sneaking, thievish, and perfidious. Nay, nature cannot furnish emblems extensive enough, and so start up to our astonished sight the most hideous shapes of fiendlike dragons and griffins, black, blasted as by infernal fires; the most fuliginous of monsters; and if the human shape is assumed for the guardians and supporters of aristocracy, they are wild and savage men, armed with clubs and grim with hair, scowling brute defiance, and seeming ready to knock down any man at the command of their lords. Ay, the very birds of prey are called in; and eagles, vultures, cormorants, in most expressive attitudes, with most ludicrous embellishments of crowned heads, collared necks, escutcheoned sides, and with hoisted wings and beaks of open and devouring wrath, proclaim the same great truth, that aristocracy is of the class of what the Germans call *Raub-thieren*, or robber-beasts—in our vernacular, *beasts of prey*.

It is, indeed, a remarkable display. All is brute and destructive in their emblematic distinctions. There is scarcely a trace of any symbol of the intellectual, civilized, or benevolent. Aristocracy is, in fact, of brute origin—it cannot disguise itself. They who have raised our race from brutality and baseness of

nature, by science, by philosophy, by poetry, by religion, and works of love, have no sign and banner of distinction here. They who are the genuine nobles of the earth, and the supporters of whose shields would be angels of mercy; the divine hand put forth from the depths of invisibility to sustain the heroes of humanity amid the war of prejudices and of ignorant hatred; the morning and the evening star that have seen them rising to think and act for their suffering fellows, and seeking out by night suffering virtue, forsaken poverty, and unmerited distress, in dark alleys and dim hovels, these would have far different insignia. Children, orphans, and oppressed children that have been raised from anguish, and plucked from the atmosphere of moral plague, would arise and stand as their supporters. Gratitude, homage, reverence, and weeping affection in every heavenly, radiant, or venerable shape, would uphold the shields of the true divinities of the earth, the genuine sons and servants of the all-pure and all-embracing God. Such men as Alfred the Great, the one genuine king of a thousand years, a kingly soul, a king of virtue and of light; such men as Wycliffe, as the great martyrs, and the great philosophers and enlighteners, would have noble escutcheons and illustrious supporters in the ranks of a genuine nobility. Kings and queens would be proud to stand in crown and royal robes to do them homage. Milton, Marvel, Hampden, Sidney, Russell, Bacon as the philosopher, Newton, Howard, Jenner, who subdued the great plague of the small-pox, Bentham, Watt, Bolton, Davy, Arkwright, Scott, Wordsworth, every man that has contracted the empire of ignorance and misery, and extended that of power, knowledge, and enjoyment, would have a shield in the house of the true national nobility.

But no such men are found here. *Such* men have their shields and statues in a far nobler house,—in the Walhalla of the universe, and their pedestals are hewn from the eternal quarries of grateful humanity. Those who have *assumed* the name of nobles, stand confessed by their very symbols as well as by their deeds, to be a race of impostors. They count amongst them, it is true, a solitary Nelson, a solitary Byron, a few Hoods, Ansons, and St. Vincents, who have fought and achieved, but too often, like the great Duke of the present day, in the cause of false principles and royal despotism, making the bloody path of their victories but fresh tracks of misery and degradation to the coming generations. A few such there are, take them as a whole, about a score, and some of these of questionable merit for morality and genuine patriotism; but for the

rest,—never was such a rabble of impostors collected together by such vile and ignominious means;—by royal folly and favouritism, by ministerial corruption, alighting naturally on the worst of objects.

We do not mean to say that there are not many worthy people in this class. Many amiable and enlightened people there are; many who are desirous and diligently labouring to be of service in their day and generation; but it was not for such things that their ancestors were raised to the rank of aristocrats, nor is it for such things that they are retained in it. Their style and title of *noble* has no such origin. The whole basis and superstructure, and objects of an aristocratic order are false and mischievous, and those who are good and amiable in its ranks, would be still better out of them. Their best views are bedimmed; their best deeds and aspirations are cramped and crippled by the deadly weight of aristocratic death around them. They are institutions that mould and corrupt men, not men that corrupt the institutions, or that can make what is bad, good and salutary. Human nature is one and the same stuff, but out of it, as out of clay, various vessels are made, vessels of honour or vessels of dishonour according to the hand that guides and the machinery that operates their frail form and destiny. The king and beggar, the priest and layman, the aristocrat and the democrat, are all of the one and same stuff; circumstances alone have turned them out what they are. Had those circumstances been reversed, the hand that now pens this page might have been that of a lord as sternly "standing by his order." But while this truth should disarm our hearts of all rancour against individuals, it should make them valiant to destroy or remodel institutions which the experience of ages has shown to the general mind to be evil,—destroyers of men, destroyers of national property and social good; destroyers of men's souls. We should abolish mischievous institutions both for the common happiness of society, and for the individual good of those who are involved in them.

We have shown in this history how vain and ridiculous are all the pretences of pure blood, and of Norman descent. We have shown that that very Norman descent is but a descent from the savage Danes. We have shown further, that even the few who can trace their genealogy up to Norman times, can claim no distinction there. The chronicles show, on the best evidence, that all the really great leaders having enticed themselves with English plunder, returned to Normandy to enjoy their wealth at home; that these were succeeded by repeated flights of such as the Conqueror could call together from every nation of Europe by his

proclamations,—the very refuse and arch-vagabonds of the whole world. We have shown how, from age to age, fresh swarms from the continent of such desperate and characterless adventurers entered the army and service of our monarchs in the most distracted times, and filled up the lists of the titled. We have shown how almost every title of note has successively rested on the heads of traitors, murderers, and the vilest men of our annals. So that even those who can trace themselves to Norman times, trace out only their own infamy, affiliating themselves on some monster disgraceful to his country, or to the mere bakers and butchers and cooks of the lordly Normans.

But the fact is, that none of our nobility have titles of any such date. *Their* ancestors were too insignificant at that time to acquire the smallest title. Our very oldest titles are those of the baronies of Le Despencer, De Ros, and Hastings, who figured chiefly in the time of the weak Edward II. These are not of 1066, the date of the Conquest, but of 1264, in the latter end of the reign of Henry III., and actually of Edward I., that is, nearly 200 years after it. This, however, would have been something of a descent, had it been a clear and unbroken one; but all these baronies are what are called *restored* ones; that is, they are titles which, for want of a true genealogical descent, had fallen into desuetude; but which, in order to fill up the aristocratic order, have been given to some family that could make out some sort of a claim, be it the very lowest and most serpentine imaginable. Thus that of the Le Despenchers has gone wandering in search of an owner from 1400, when the last Earl Le Despencer was beheaded, by Edward III., for his treason, till 1788, during which it lay in abeyance, that is to say 388 years. Through this long period, if we are to believe the heralds, the blood of the Le Despenchers had meandered from this sister and that cousin, to this great-grand-son or that great-grand-daughter; and in the course of this tour had skipped from the Le Despenchers to the Nevilles; from the Nevilles to the Fanes; from the Fanes had made a vault to the Dashwoods; and from the Dashwoods had leaped to the Stapletons; in plain fact, had wandered, curvetted, dodged, made curious winding pilgrimages, but had not descended at all.

In the same manner the barony of Hastings, from the same date till 1841, or 577 years, had gone all about the country, yet never got lost. It had passed, or rather the blood of Hastings had, through the Le Stranges, Yelvertons, Stubbses, Lewknors, Cokes, Wodehouses, Calthorps, Norths, Stylemans, Pratts, Watlingtons, Delavals, and at last into the veins of one Jacob Astley, "in whose person her present Majesty was pleased to terminate

the abeyance, he being *one of the heirs* of Sir John Hastings, who was summoned to parliament by Edward I."

In this transaction we hardly know which most to admire; the admirable qualities of noble blood, which for 577 years can make such extraordinary rambles, leaps, strolls, turns, and twinings, besides many a game of hide and seek, and yet preserve itself distinct and uncontaminated, or the easy faith of her Majesty, who could take it all in. If it be a wise child that knows its own father, what wise people must those Hastings be! But the history of the De Ros family is the same. The descent winded from the De Roses to the Manners, the Cecils, and back to the Manners again; then to the Villiers, Dukes of Buckingham, till it was finally extinguished on the death of the second duke, no pretence for its continuance being found even by the amazing sagacity of the heralds. The only claimants then were the heirs of Bridget, wife of Sir Thomas Tyrwhit, of Kettleby, and Frances, wife of William Lord Willoughby, the only sisters who left issue of one of the Earls of Rutland. In short, it was so completely a bad business, that the claims were disallowed, and all pretence of the baronial blood fell till 1806, when George III. having the advantage of the light of our enlightened age, in the course of his 522 restorations and creations, was pleased to discover it again.

Such is the poor hocus-pocus of aristocracy. It is surely the most precious humbug and paltry mystification under the sun. What, however, knocks the whole pretentious system completely on the head is, that George III. manufactured, as may be seen in any book of the peerage, no less than 522 peers! Now take from the present number 573, these manufactures of George III., and there remain but fifty-one which could possibly be of prior date; and this is completely corroborated by the fact stated by both heralds and peerages, that at the end of the reign of Elizabeth there were not fifty-six nobles! Moreover, if we mark off all the present existing peerages that profess to be more than 200 years old, they amount but to 105. Now within this two hundred years there have not been less, probably, than four or five hundred that have become extinct, so that the greater number, if not all these, must have been in that predicament, and can be looked on only as restorations. In fact, it is only by looking into our books of the peerage, such as Burke or Debret, works got up to flatter the aristocracy as much as possible, that we, nevertheless, become aware of what a fugacious and perishable nature is aristocracy, spite of primogeniture and all artificial means to give it duration. In these works the extinct peerages amount to no less than 2,298.

	English.	Scotch.	Irish.	Total.
Extinct peerages . . .	1,406 . . .	312 . . .	580 . . .	2,298
Making, with the existing peerage . . .				573
				<hr/> 2,871

Thus, so fragile is the noble clay, that nearly three thousand families in this United Kingdom have been ennobled, exclusive of all the honours of baronetcy and knighthood.

Nay, almost every year displays to us the perishableness of nobility. Take for 1845 the doings of

DEATH AMONG THE ARISTOCRACY.

The number of peers who have died in the course of the year 1845 is larger than usual, the number having been in 1843, 20; in 1844, 19; while this year it has amounted to 28, viz., four marquises—Sligo, Westminster, Downshire, and Ely; 13 earls—St. Germans, Effingham, Mornington, Romney, Egremont (extinct), Abergavenny, Stamford and Warrington, Dunmore, Grey, Spencer, Verulam, Belmore, and Portarlington; one viscount—Canterbury; and 10 barons—Aston (extinct), Wynford, Carbery, Harris, Seaford (inherited by Baron Howard de Walden), Bateman, Montagu (extinct), Hartland (extinct), Stuart de Rothesay (extinct), and Wharnccliffe. Their respective ages were as follow:—

Earl of Dunmore . . .	41	Baron Wharnccliffe . . .	69
Earl of Belmore . . .	44	Earl of Verulam . . .	70
Earl of Abergavenny . . .	55	Baron Hartland . . .	73
Marquis of Downshire . . .	56	Baron Seaford . . .	74
Marquis of Sligo . . .	57	Baron Aston . . .	75
Earl of Egremont . . .	58	Marquis of Ely . . .	73
Earl Spencer . . .	63	Earl of Effingham . . .	77
Baron Harris . . .	63	Baron Wynford . . .	77
Earl of Portarlington . . .	64	Marquis of Westminster . . .	78
Baron Bateman . . .	65	Earl of St. Germans . . .	78
Viscount Canterbury . . .	66	Earl of Stamford and Warrington . . .	80
Baron Stuart de Rothesay . . .	67	Baron Carbery . . .	80
Earl of Romney . . .	67	Earl Grey . . .	81
Baron Montagu . . .	69	Earl of Mornington . . .	82

Thus averaging 68 years.

The four reigns in which an unusual manufacture of nobility has taken place, are those of Edward I., Charles I., Charles II., and George III.

Peers made by Edward I. . .	164
" Charles I. . .	187
" Charles II. . .	178
" George III. . .	522
On an average by other monarchs . . .	50

Why Edward I. created so amazing a number as 164 peers, the average by other monarchs being only 50, historians take little notice of; but it probably was to reduce the pride and power of the few old, rude, and turbulent ones. Thus, when he inquired by his commissioners into the encroachments upon his forests, Earl Warren in reply to their query, what was his title to certain lands, drew his sword, and said—that was it. That the Conqueror did not conquer England by and for himself. His ancestors had helped him for themselves, and what he had got he would fight for. Again, when he commanded Bohun Earl of Hereford and Bigod Earl of Norfolk to go with the army into Gascony, they refused; and on his saying to Bohun, “Sir earl, by God you shall go, or hang;” he replied, “By God, sir king, I will neither go nor hang!” and both marched away. Well may Hume say that “Edward regarded the great barons both as the immediate rivals of the crown and oppressors of the people.” That they ever were and are;—their only great principle—self-aggrandizement. For this cause, as Edward was engaged in great wars with the Welch, Scotch, and French, he increased both houses of parliament, so as at once to reduce the dangerous power of these overgrown old barons, and to enable himself with a greater show of authority to extract the necessary funds. He knew that the way to make obedient tools was through heaping on them honours. What the heralds and writers of peerages then mean by his creation of 164 peers, is, that he summoned so many more under the name of barons, not by ancient *title*, but by *verit*, to his parliament, and thence these families date their rank as peers. By the following analysis, we find that the bulk of the present titles that claim to be more than 200 years old are barons.

Peerages claiming to be more than 200 years old, 105.

		English.	
Out of our	27 Dukes, only . . . 2, Norfolk and Somerset . . . 2		
“	37 Marquises . . . 2, Winchester and Huntley . . . 2		
“	210 Earls . . . 39, Scotch and Irish . . . 27 . . . 12		
“	69 Viscounts . . . 10, . . . 9 . . . 1		
“	230 Barons . . . 52, . . . 22 . . . 30		
	<hr/> 573	<hr/> 105	<hr/> English only 47

Thus 30 out of the 47 English peers are barons. The causes, however, which influenced the Charleses and George III. in the augmentation of the noblesse were very different to the motives of Edward I. The purpose of the latter monarchs was to counterbalance the influence of the people. Charles I. saw that awful popular power rising, which, spite of his efforts, squandered his

mushroom nobles, and cut off his head. He had made of English 130, Irish 52: total 182. His son Charles II. made of English 137, Irish 41: total 178; for he lived in the dreadful recollection of the popular power, and its destruction of his father, while he also sought to crush it by the money and aid of France. George III. was engaged in a far bolder attempt to enforce despotic government not only at home but in America, and on the continent. That lawless and spendthrift system of aristocratic borough-mongering and plunder of the state was in full play, and in order to prevent all resistance on the part of the people, every plan was resorted to that could raise an invincible defence against the very chance of a demand for the restitution of their constitution by them. Hence, purchase of boroughs, bribery, the corruption of all classes of men, and especially of rich landholders, who were seduced by titles as well as places, to the amazing extent of 522 peerages out of 573!* So awful was this system of buying up every man with Government money become, that Sir Humphrey Sydenham, so early as 1745, on Mr. Carew's motion for annual parliaments, declared that "it was the first cause that corrupted the simplicity of country manners and industry. That they were first destroyed by this ministerial bribery money. The idle and vicious electors who sold themselves, finding that they need not work, and had yet a trade in their fingers which could maintain them in dissipation, began aping their superiors; and these superiors, seeing this conduct with disgust, vowed they would not spend their incomes amongst those who thus meanly and ungratefully treated them, and betook themselves to London or abroad."†

This was a serious blow to our national heart and manners; the first fruits of government corruption, which soon spread into one universal deluge. The aristocracy and country gentry speedily became corruptors themselves, and having by their war and waste system reduced the whole people to poverty, they then tempted them in town and country, on occasions, with bribes, till every man came to lose the sense of political purity, in the phrase of Walpole "to have his price," and political temptation inflicted a dreadful wound on the moral principle of the nation.

George III. soon found means to corrupt the aristocracy who thus "betook themselves to London" with both money and titles, so that nearly the whole House of Peers became such as we have seen, 522 new made out of 573.

If we turn then to the list of our nobility, and go a little into par-

* See the list at the end of Debret's Peerage.

† Parliamentary Debates of the time.

ticalars, we find, previous to the commencement of George III.'s reign in 1760, just 20 dukes. The oldest in date is the Duke of Norfolk. This family is one of the most respectable of its class, but it began only to be much distinguished in Henry VIII.'s time; and dates from 1483, a duration of 361 years. Even this family, during the reigns of Elizabeth and Edward VI., was mixed up with affairs that reflected no credit on it, and some of its leaders not only lost their heads, but assisted in bringing each other to the block. In fact, after three several attainders, the title became extinct, and was only restored in 1660, and since then has had several removes to second and third cousins. The present occupier of the title has restored all the ancient splendour of the house, and will go down to posterity as the famous curry-powder duke. He will be found in our list of discoverers, having made the astonishing and most invaluable discovery, that a pinch of curry-powder, and warm water are an admirable substitute for roast beef and plum pudding.

The next family, that of Somerset, was of little or no account till Henry VIII. cast his lascivious eye on Jane Seymour, one of its daughters. Having already got rid of two wives, he married Jane Seymour the very day after he cut off Ann Boleyn's head. On this sudden and unexpected stroke of good fortune, the Seymour family started into a mushroom greatness. Jane's brother, Thomas, was made Lord Seymour of Sudeley, and after Henry VIII.'s death, he married his widow, Catherine Parr. His brother Edward was also created Earl of Hertford, and on Henry's death, Duke of Somerset; or might be said rather to make himself so, as well as Protector of England.

To such a pitch did the upstart ambition of these men grow, as we have shown in its proper place, that the Lord Seymour, who had been made admiral, not only, as observed, married the king's widow, but on her death, sought to secure the hand of the princess Elizabeth, evidently aiming at the crown itself. "He was a man," says Hume, "of insatiable ambition; arrogant, assuming, and implacable." He sought to hurl his brother from the protectorate, and the brother in return took off his head. But the protector himself, having dreadfully reduced the kingdom, and brought it to desperate distress, was himself arrested and beheaded. Such was the beginning, and such the *services* that gave rank to this family. The descent of it has been far from unbroken. The title was extinguished by the attainder of the aforesaid duke; was only restored in 1640, being in abeyance nearly 100 years. It merged into the duchy of Northumberland by the sole heiress, who married Sir Hugh Smythson, and became extinct in 1750. The title was then restored and

given to another line, tracing from before the attainder of 1552, but was, in fact, a new creation, and properly only commences in 1750.

Next in succession to these came the bastards of Charles II., as dukes, of whom the nation was saddled with six. Four of those whose descendants still hold that title, were the Dukes of Richmond, St. Albans, Grafton, and Buccleugh. The Duke of Richmond was the son of his mistress, Barbara Villiers, made by him Duchess of Cleveland. This son was the product of the most open and profligate double adultery, Charles being married, and this mistress being the wife of one Charles Palmer, who was promoted to the earldom of Castlemain, as the price of his wife's prostitution. St. Albans was the son of the actress Nell Gwynne; Grafton, the son of Charles's French mistress, Kerouaille; and Buccleugh was Charles's reputed son, the Duke of Monmouth, Monmouth having married the heiress of Buccleugh, and taken the name. The Duke of Monmouth was the son of one of Charles's earliest mistresses, one Lucy Walters, who was abandoned by him, and died in destitution in France. Such was the loose character of this Lucy Walters, that it was very doubtful that Charles was the father of Monmouth at all, but was confidently attributed to a brother of Algernon Sidney. On such dubious and scandalous extraction sit the honours of our nobility; such is the descent of the chief dukes of England.

With these stands the Duke of Beaufort, descended from a bastard of that Duke of Somerset who was beheaded by Edward IV. for high treason. Then follows the Duke of Portland, the descendant of William III.'s Dutch favourite, Bentinck, whom he enriched with English lands. The whigs who climbed up in Anne's time were, the Bedfords, Devons, and Marlboroughs, whose victories, which gave them title, were nullified by the next batch of tory ministers; and Leeds, the Danby of those times, who was impeached for bribery and embezzlement. Of such materials are the proudest descendants of our peerage! Had we room to go through the whole history of aristocratical creations, it would present such a scene of political wickedness and treason to the real interests of the nation as would stamp the character of this order with eternal infamy instead of honour. In a former chapter we have seen that the boasted peers of Elizabeth will not bear searching into. They were *ennobled*—what an abuse of honest English!—for systematic murders at the queen's command. In every future reign the vilest ministerial and state jobbing was the road to promotion; the vilest bargains were the price of such honour. As we approach George III.'s reign, boroughs were sold for titles. The notorious Bubb Dod-

dington, in Walpole's time, had five or six to sell, and was made, for the use of them, Lord Melcombe. But we need not refer farther than to Debreys' Peerage, where it stands confessed that nearly the whole of the present nobility are a fungus race of George III.'s time, created for the direct purpose of crushing the popular voice out of the constitution. The plan was begun in Queen Anne's reign by the tories, who, to acquire a majority over the whigs in the Lords, prevailed on the fat and foolish queen to create a *dozen* peers; just as a baker would make a dozen of bread to satisfy his hungry customers. The example was followed whenever it was needful, till in George III.'s reign it arrived at its full-blown rankness. The book of the peerage itself confesses, that of the 522 out of 573, the full number of the peers, 364, were spic-and-span new creations. The rest were virtually so. To cover the vile business of crowding so many nobles into the legislature to outweigh popular influence, every pretence, however stale and far-fetched, of a descent from some old title was dragged in, and the title, as it was called, was *restored*. If we go into the claims of this manufacture, we become quite amazed at the ingenuity of heralds and politicians, by which a descent is made out; as for instance, in those of the old baronies, the De Roses, Le Despencers, &c. The fifty-six nobles of Elizabeth is a most demolishing fact. If not fifty-six since that period, but 500 have become extinct, it is clear that scarcely a *bonâ fide* noble descent of Elizabeth's age exists. The old nominal barons, we find, are new creations; the Duke of Norfolk is not really of 1483, but of 1660; and the Duke of Somerset is not of 1547, but of 1750. There is not, we believe, a strict and unbroken line of title which can come within five hundred years of the Conquest.

Since Elizabeth's reign the mushroom growth of peers has been of mushroom rapidity. James I. made 105, for he had many hungry Scots and favourites to accommodate. Such were the ruffian debauchee Villiers and the murderer Carr; for the last of whom he took Sir Walter Raleigh's estate from his widow and children (having himself killed their father), saying, "I maun ha' it for Carr." He had besides a whole troop of slaves to bring up to enable him to carry out his plans of "kingcraft," as he called despotism, which brought his son to the block. Charles I. made thirty, making the total 135; for the mushrooms rapidly rotted, or were trodden underfoot of the parliamentary armies. Charles II. created fifteen dukes, six of them his own bastards; one marquis; thirty-seven earls; three countesses, his concubines; two viscounts, and twenty-nine barons. William III. raised five earls into dukes; created eighteen earls,

three viscounts, and nine barons. Anne raised the peerage to 170. George I. created and restored 114, and George II. 166; but George III. set up the most enormous mushroom *forcing* bed, and raised a jolly crop of 522.

In 1777 a batch of peers were draughted from the Commons to effect a ministerial majority. Pitt made a wholesale practice of this. In 1797 ten were made at once. He created nearly the whole order of marquises. He made ten English ones, where there was but one before; and nine Irish, where there were none. For what purpose we have seen—it was to keep down and ruin their respective countries.

But it is not merely the infamy by which the mass of peers has been made; the infamy by which, spite of their pretences of pure blood, they have been kept up, is pretty much the same. To say nothing of the readiness with which aristocratic high blood has taken up with the very lowest of plebeian blood when it has had a big money-box to charm away aristocratic debts, by which means the daughters of fat London aldermen have so often become the mothers of noble lines; nor of the quantity of player-blood which has been imported into the very highest houses,—what is the system by which the whole fabric of aristocracy is upheld? As we have shown, by a direct attack on the very vitals of commerce in the shape of wars, and the consequent creation of the great continental system of exclusion of our manufactures. Nor does it stop here. So conscious are the noblesse of the monstrosity of the system, of the notoriously unpatriotic character of their policy, of the hatred of it by the very farmers for whose protection they boast the corn-laws to exist, that there is scarcely a man of them who dares give to his tenants a lease which would give him some degree of independence of mind and vote. No, these farmers, these men whom they protect by their corn-laws, must be kept tenants-at-will, that, if they dare to give an independent vote, they may at will be turned adrift. The very farmer's capital, his views of improvement, his independence of mind and voice, his honour as a man, his conscience as a Christian, nay, his very means of existence, must be at the daily mercy of his landlord. Still, with all his tyrannous caution, the conscious aristocrat feels that he sits continually on a barrel of gunpowder, which a single spark of indignant feeling in the heart of an honest tenantry may at any hour cause to explode, and blow him into the clouds. Hence, the British farmer is a slave; and dreading, under such a system, to expend his capital on lands which he holds by so frail a tenure, or having sunk his capital in it under aristocratic pro-

tection, the labourers are pressed down into the condition we have described, pigging together in misery and incest; and those who have no fuel for a fire in their dismal dwellings, go out and warm themselves at burning ricks, or hold by moonlight dismal Goatacre meetings.

Can anything better exemplify the length to which the tyranny of aristocratic landlords has arrived, than the following newspaper statement?—

LORD STANLEY—FIXITY OF TENURE.

The following remarkable statement, describing Lord Stanley's practice in Tipperary, contrasted with his professions in Lancashire, appears in the *Tipperary Free Press*:—

"Lord Stanley's accession to this great principle, it is angured, is of the utmost value. But is Lord Stanley sincere? He has considerable property in and around Tipperary and Cashel. His estates are, to a great extent, the most productive, fertile, and best-situated, of any in either county. Without capital, manure, stock, or skill, no one could fail to pay a reasonable rent for such land and be comparatively comfortable. Having these advantages from Nature, no great encouragement would be needed on the part of the landlord to raise the tenants to a position of comfort, cleanliness, and respectability, far beyond any in their neighbourhood. Are they so? But unfortunately the facts in this case exclude every inquiry: Not only are they not above their neighbours, but they are infinitely below many of them. We know not where there are a tenantry, as a class, who exhibit less appearance of comfort and culture, such as are visible on the estates of kind, indulgent, and encouraging landlords.

"His lordship is the owner, and has had sole control over those Irish estates since his marriage, a period of at least twenty years. During that time, we question much if his lordship ever made a lease to a single tenant. We believe most of them are without leases, and that his lordship has made it an unbending rule to grant none. He has in some instances set aside leases made by his father, containing severe, feudal, and impracticable conditions. Some of those leases were produced in courts of justice. It appeared from them that the tenants who had them were almost as insecure as if they held at the simple will of the lord. There were covenants against assignment, against subletting, against grinding corn anywhere but in his lordship's mill, against selling the produce anywhere but in his lordship's manor town, where there was neither mill nor manor, and where it was impossible to fulfil the conditions; so that, at any hour his lord-

ship's caprice might direct, he could turn round and evict the tenant's interest. He did so in some instances; and we well remember that the construction of those unusual covenants afforded matter of curious inquiry to the Bar and even to the Bench.

"One case was this: A man named Neill had his daughter married to a man named Gleeson. Gleeson paid Neill 200*l.*, and got an assignment of the land with Neill's daughter. Neill's father was living, and had years before assigned to him. The first assignment from the father to the son was a breach of the covenant, and created a forfeiture just as well as if it had been made to another man. But Lord Stanley did not take advantage of it until the second assignment and marriage, of which he disapproved. It was then relied on for Gleeson that the lord waved his right by concurring in the first assignment; but his lordship's agent proved that he refused to concur, and that during the son's term he sedulously avoided recognising the tenancy, so that he could at any time he pleased turn round upon and oust him. When Neill, the son, attempted to select a husband for his daughter without consulting Lord Stanley, an ejectment was brought, and, after a struggle of two years, succeeded. His lordship triumphed over Gleeson, rather than forego an advantage afforded him by a doubtful construction of an absurd covenant.

"It is fit this should be known in England—it is well it should be used to test the sincerity of those admonitions of his lordship in reference to the sort of interest which, without considering the tenant's claims, he deems it advisable the landlords should give them."

In the lists of George III.'s reign, there is nothing so remarkable as the number of Irish titles that range between 1780 and 1800; the period during which bribery and every species of intimidation and temptation were busily at work in the hands of Lord Castlereagh to bring about the union. Of the creations of this period, to say nothing of *restorations*, there were no less than eight Irish marquises, twenty-three earls, ten viscounts, and thirty-seven barons!

The most remarkable feature in the modern lists of the peerage, is the vast number of lawyers, or descendants of lawyers, that is, of such as have come into the peerage by the great political law ladder that crowd the House of Lords.

Those who have been made peers directly as the consequence of legal promotion, are no less than fifty, and are as follows:—

Created.	Present Title.	Men ennobled.	Legal Post.
1682	Earl of Aberdeen	George Gordon	Lord Chancellor of Scotland
1693	Earl of Guildford	Edward Nash	{ Chancellor of Court of Augmen- tations
1693	Earl of Kinnoul	George Hay	Lord Chancellor of Scotland
1695	Earl of Lishurn	John Vaughan	Ld. Ch. Jus. Com. Pleas, Ireland
1620	Duke of Manchester	Henry Montague	Chief Justice of King's Bench
1661	Earl of Shaftesbury	{ Anthony Ashley Cooper }	Lord Chancellor
1691	Earl of Stair	James Dalrymple	President of Court of Session
1714	Earl of Aylesford	Hemeage Finch	Attorney-General
1784	Baron Alvanley	{ Richard Pepper Arden }	Lord Chief Justice of Com. Pleas
1795	Viscount Avonmore	Barry Yelverton	Ld. Ch. Bn. of Exchequer, Ireland
1765	Marquis of Camden	John Pratt	Lord Chief Justice of Com. Pleas
1789	Earl of Clare	John Fitzgibbon	Lord Chancellor
1793	Earl of Clonmell	John Scott	{ Lord Chief Justice of King's Bench, Ireland
1707	Earl Cowper	William Cowper	Lord Chancellor
1799	Earl of Eldon	John Scott	Chief Justice of Common Pleas
1782	Baron Grantley	Fletcher Norton	Chief Justice in Eyre
1783	Earl of Hardwick	Philip Yorke	Chief Justice of King's Bench
1776	Earl of Harrowby	Dudley Rider	Chief Justice of King's Bench
1788	Baron Kenyon	Lloyd Kenyon	Chief Justice of King's Bench
1768	Baron Lifford	James Hewitt	Lord Chancellor of Ireland
1715	Earl of Lovelace	Peter King	Lord Chief Justice of Com. Pleas
1715	Earl of Macclesfield	Thomas Parker	Lord Chief Justice Queen's Bench
1776	Earl of Mansfield	William Murray	Lord Chief Justice King's Bench
1715	Viscount Middleton	Allan Brodrick	Lord Chancellor of Ireland
1743	Earl of Roden	Robert Jocelyn	Lord Chancellor of Ireland
1780	Earl of Roelyn	{ Alexander Wed- derburn }	Chief Justice of Com. Pleas
1733	Lord Talbot	Charles Talbot	Lord Chancellor
1778	Baron Thurlow	Edward Thurlow	Lord Chancellor
1743	Baron Walsingham	William Walsingham	Chief Justice of Common Pleas
1823	Earl of Ashinger	James Scarlett	Lord Chief Baron of Exchequer
1830	Baron Brougham	Henry Brougham	Lord Chancellor
1841	Baron Campbell	John Campbell	Lord Chancellor
1836	Baron Cottenham	Charles C. Pepys	Lord Chancellor
1834	Baron Denman	Thomas Denman	Chief Justice King's Bench
1802	Earl of Ellenbo- rough	Edward Law	Chief Justice King's Bench
1806	Baron Erskine	Thomas Erskine	Lord Chancellor
1824	Baron Gifford	Robert Gifford	Lord Chief Justice of Com. Pleas
1831	Viscount Guille- more	Standish O'Grady	Ld. Ch. Jus. of Exchequer, Ireland
1819	Earl of Haddington	Thomas Haddington	Lord Advocate, Scotland
1836	Baron Langdale	Henry Bickersteth	Master of the Rolls
1802	Viscount Melville	Henry Dundas	Lord Chancellor, Scotland
1800	Earl of Norbury	John Toles	Ld. Ch. Jus. of Com. Pleas, Ireland
1827	Baron Plunket	{ Wm. Conyngham Plunket }	Lord Chancellor, Ireland
1802	Baron Redesdale	John Milford	Lord Chancellor, Ireland
1827	Baron Tenterden	Charles Abbott	Lord Chief Justice King's Bench
1838	Marquis of Win- chester	William Paulet	Lord Chancellor
1829	Baron Wynford	Wm. Draper Best	Chief Justice Common Pleas

Besides these, there are at least fifty other families in the present peerage which have been made by the law, and many of them have been created, some individuals directly, others indirectly ;

some in their own persons, others in their sons, and others again in their descendants, though none of them might hold an office which at the time was a settled stepping-stone to title. It was not till late years that it grew into a fixed practice that a lord chief justice or lord-chancellor must of course become a peer. It is a modern politic refinement, which has tended to crowd the upper house with lawyers, and to load the state with their salaries. A lord-chancellor is removable with every change of ministry. Hence we have at present four lord-chancellors, or ex-lord-chancellors, every one with a salary or a pension; that is, we have the services of one, and pay for four.

Of the families of lawyers not directly recognisable by the public as such, the origin of many of them in the crowd of creations being almost overlooked and forgotten, are these:—

Ward, Viscount Bangor.
 White, Earl of Bantry.
 Fitzgibbon, Earl of Clare.
 Bridgman, Earl of Bradford.
 Hampden, Earl of Buckingham.
 Sinclair, Earl of Caithness.
 Brudenel, Earl of Cardigan.
 Massey, Baron Clarina.
 Parnel, Baron Congleton.
 Maitland, Earl of Lauderdale.
 Stapleton, Baroness Le Despencer.
 Leigh, Baron Leigh.
 Coventry, Earl of Coventry.
 Crofton, Baron Crofton.
 Sidney, Baron de Lisle.
 Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire.
 Hutchinson, Earl of Donoughmore.
 Fortescue, Earl Fortescue.
 Montmorency, Viscount Frankfurt.
 Littleton, Baron Hatherton.
 Hope, Earl of Hopetown.
 Bromley, Lord Montfort.
 Temple, Viscount Palmerston.
 Ponsonby, Baron Ponsonby.
 Powis, Baron Lalford.
 Vaughan, Earl of Lisburn.

O'Callaghan, Viscount Lismore.
 Jenkinson, Earl of Liverpool.
 Pakenham, Baron Langford.
 Lyttleton, Baron Lyttleton.
 Harris, Earl of Malmesbury.
 Lamb, Viscount Melbourne.
 Methuen, Baron Methuen.
 Willoughby, Baron Middleton.
 Wellesley Pole, Earl of Mornington.
 Wellesley, Duke of Wellington.
 Phipps, Marquis of Normanby.
 Primrose, Earl of Roseberry.
 Parsons, Earl of Rosse.
 Montague, Earl of Sandwich.
 Ellis, Baron Seaforth.
 Roper-Curson, Baron Teynham.
 Turnour, Earl of Winterton.
 Anderson-Pelham, Earl of Yarborough.
 Howard, Duke of Norfolk.
 Manners, Duke of Rutland.
 Hyde, Earl of Clarendon.
 Gray, Earl of Tankerville.
 Townshend, Marquis of Townshend.
 Cavendish, Earl of Burlington.

Besides these, Foss, in his "Grandeur of the Law," includes the Marquises of Salisbury, Exeter, Aylesbury, and Bristol; the Earls of Suffolk, Winchelsea, Carlisle, Egremont, Guildford, Bathurst, Verulam, Bradford, Somers, Effingham, and Leicester. Bishop Fleetwood, in his time, estimated the peers of law origin

at three-fourths. He asks whether it is at all likely that the peerage can be raised in moral worth by so numerous descent from whom Ben Jonson styles—

Men of that large profession who can speak
To every cause, and things indeed contraries,
Till they are hoarse again, yet all be law.
That with most quick agility can turn
And return, make knots and undo them;
Give forked counsel, take provoking gold
From either side, and put it up.

Of such, there are at any rate more than a hundred in the House of Lords. When we consider the still greater amount of these birds of prey that have gone into the extinct peerage, we must confess that we have yet something left to be thankful for; and, on the other hand, when we recollect what still greater swarms have reached knighthood and baronetcy, it must be equally allowed that the lawyers have something to be thankful for; they have grasped a lion's share of the great prizes of the state lottery.

But what concerns us most is the imminent danger to the constitution in this surprising amount of lawyers in the upper house. When the gates, not only of immense wealth, but of the very highest honours of the state are thus set wide to daring legal adventurers, is it any wonder that there is always a copious supply of needy, able, ductile tools for ministerial or royal use? Lawyers are proverbial for their avidity of gain in every shape; for their thirst of gold and ambition of rank; is this not the way then to call forth a whole crowd for the race after such glorious prizes? Is it not enough to turn honest men into knaves, and knaves into arch-knaves? Is it any wonder when chief justiceships and chancellorships are synonymous with patents of perpetual nobility, that men should be ready to sell their souls for them? That they should begin in the House of Commons to distinguish themselves as noisy, restless demagogues, in order to render themselves worth buying by a *discerning* ministry? It would be a wonder if it were not so. How many base tools of tyranny has this fatal facility of turning lawyers into lords made conspicuous in our annals? For one Sir Matthew Hale or Baron Denman, how many bloody Jefferies, blustering Cokes, time-serving Noyes, insolent Wedderburns, and turncoat Lyndhursts have we not had?

It may be thought that clever lawyers are the most fitting law-makers, but nothing is more false or mischievous than such a notion. The best law-makers are plain honest men; the very

worst, as our mountain of bad and useless laws can testify, are lawyers, cunning, despotic, and corrupt. Who that ever attempted to carry a just measure through parliament, did not find cause to rue the presence and the tricks of the law lords in the upper house? Who does not know what hosts of good laws they have immolated there on the altar of corruption and despotism—what hosts of delusive and destructive ones they have given birth to?

The most fatal portion of the aristocratic upper house has been unquestionably the lawyers. What the corrupt minister has planned, and the corrupt borough-monger has been ready to support, the tribe of titled lawyers have with practical subtlety made plausible with their tongues. They have made "the worse appear the better reason," to the ruin of the country.

In a former page I have presented a solemn warning of what a tribe of lawyers in a legislature are likely to do. In the list of those in the Irish parliament, the number of lawyers who sold themselves for money or promotion to the English ministry for carrying the Union, are no less than thirty-four. For really useful purposes of legislation, there should be a mere sprinkling of lawyers in the houses of parliament; just sufficient to assist in giving force and precision in legislative enactments, but not so many as to enable them to warp or mislead the popular spirit of legislation. While ample reward is always certain in the emoluments of their profession to good lawyers, state honours should be most sparingly and cautiously bestowed on this dangerous class of men. Why should whole troops of this class reap the honours that are only due to great and distinguished patriots? What *are* the great national achievements that have seated so many on the peerage benches? Are they *suffrages* in the popular cause?—*achievements* in the popular cause? or the projection and establishment of institutions for the security of liberty? The answer to these questions will present themselves to every honest and sagacious mind.

But it is not to the upper house that this evil confines itself. The lower house is but the passage to the upper, and into that presses a swarm of lawyers eager to mount up by the same acts, to the same gilded eminence. Without are other swarms ready to rush in. The weight of law in parliament favours the prevalence of lawyers all over the country; and under this patronage and support, to what has not the system of law, and the legion of lawyers grown in this country? The very land groans under its monstrous host of lawyers. Like the reptile curse of Pharaoh, they enter every man's house, and come up into every man's kneading-trough and money-box. Their parchments are a net

that is cast over every acre of land in England ; their red tapes bind the limbs of every man in the country. Look round you in cities—their name is Legion ; look round in the little town and even the village—they are the only flourishing men there. Ask any man if he be not in love with lawyers, and he stares and utters a curse. Yet they have woven themselves into every man's business, and made themselves indispensable ; you might as well attempt to get rid of your skins, as of lawyers, who stick, in troth, pretty fast to them. In a word, there is no craft, be it priestcraft, aristocraft, or any other, that so needs the pruning-knife of reform as the craft of the law. All men, and none more than the respectable members of the profession themselves, feel and acknowledge this ; but where shall it begin ? In the House of Peers ? It is full of lawyers ! In the House of Commons ? It is full also of those whose eyes are fixed on the woollack and the bench, and seeing coronets glitter there, forget the groans of those over whose bruised carcases they hurry and climb.

Looking, then, to the House of Peers—to the mode by which it has been filled—to the materials out of which its members have been made—and to the use which they have made of their power—the view is equally melancholy and disgraceful to us as a people. Who and what are the aristocracy of England, let this chapter answer ; let the next display to us who are the genuine nobles and builders of the national greatness.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE PEOPLE.

Riches o'erheaped turn but to rottenness,
 Choking the issues of activity,
 And swamping the life-blood that Nature willed
 Ever to run with a most sprightly stream.

ERNEST.

THE most amazing exhibition of inconsistency of national character in the whole history of the world is in that of the people of England. The most active, the most shrewd, the most practical and matter-of-fact, and at the same time the most adventurous and successful of people on the face of the earth, it cannot fail to strike every reader of their annals with unfeigned

astonishment, to see how at all times, but still more as they advance towards the summit of national greatness, in wealth, in ingenuity, in commerce, and vastness of empire, they have totally neglected the one means of securing to themselves the fruits of their own labours and genius—that of good and self-government. We behold them with unspeakable surprise, piling up with indefatigable energy advantage on advantage, and glory on glory, and suffering, with the most one-eyed unconsciousness, a race of lazy but cunning drones to filch from them the product of their toils and triumphs. We see them destroying tyrants, chasing them from the throne when in the shape of kings, but suffering them in legions when in the shape of lords. When a king seeks to destroy their constitution, they start up at once, and take off his head; but when an aristocracy does the very same thing, they tolerate, nay, they are accused by foreigners of even worshipping it. From the hour that the aristocracy contrived to secure a majority in the House of Commons, the constitution was as completely at an end as when Charles Stuart entered there and demanded, with armed troopers at his back, that the opposers of ship-money should be given up to him. Yet the acute and high-spirited British people have gone on for a hundred and fifty years dreaming of their constitution when it was in its grave, and the aristocratic usurpers were enriched at their expense, and revelling in the profits of their trade, their manufactures, and their colonies.

Had this English people been a mere plodding and labouring people, dense and dull of brain, but ready to execute, like good Chinese, any piece of business or mechanism that the bright and more inventive genius of a *really higher class* had originated; had the aristocracy of England been the party which struck out and built up arts, sciences, and philosophy; which had constructed ships, and discovered and planted new lands; had invented machinery, and brought to light steam, and gas, and all the chemical agents that have vitalised our stupendous structure of manufacturing and social existence; *then* there would have been no wonder in the matter! *Then* we might have seen the aristocracy playing strange pranks, and arrogating strange honours and emoluments at the popular cost; and however we might have lamented, we could not have marvelled. But the paradox of the thing is, that when we look at the two classes, and ask which is the originating class—the class of genius and of projective as well as executive energy, we stand in blank amaze to discover that the aristocracy are as barren as the desert sand, and as absorbent of all good. The people are the fruitful soil of all genius, of all imagination, of all constructiveness, of all valour, daring, enter-

prise, success, and national glory. The aristocracy are the mere vermin that ride in the lion's mane, because they have cleverly located themselves out of the reach of his paws.

That I may not seem too severe on the aristocratic class of the present day, I will quote the description of an aristocrat's life, drawn by one of their own class—one who had seen what he described intimately and well.

Behold him, Freshman ! forced no more to groan
O'er Virgil's devilish verses—and his own ;
Prayers are too tedious, lectures too abstruse,
He flies from Tavell's frown to Fordham's Mews.
Unlucky Tavell ! doomed to daily cares
By pugilistic pupils, and by bears.
Fines, tutors, tasks, conventions, threat in vain,
Before hounds, hunters, and Newmarket plain.
Rough with his elders, with his equals rash,
Civil to sharpers, prodigal of cash ;
Constant to nought, save hazard and a whore,
Yet cursing both, for both have made him sore ;
Unread, unless, since books beguile disease,
His pains become his passage to degrees.
Fooled, pillaged, dunned, he wastes his time away,
And, unexpelled perhaps, retires M.A. ;
Master of Arts, as *hells* and *clubs* proclaim,
Where scarce a blackleg bears a brighter name !

Launched into life, extinct his early fire,
He apes the selfish prudence of his sire ;
Marries for money, chooses friends for rank,
Buys land, and shrewdly trusts not to the bank ;
Sits in the Senate ; gets a son and heir ;
Sends him to Harrow, for himself was there.
Mute though he votes, unless when called to cheer,
His son's so sharp, he'll make the dog a peer !

Manhood declines—age palsies every limb ;
He quits the scene, or else the scene quits him ;
Scrapes wealth, o'er each departing penny grieves,
And avarice seizes all ambition leaves ;
Counts cent. per cent., and smiles or vainly frets
O'er hoards diminished by young Hopeful's debts ;
Weights well and wisely what to sell or buy,
Complete in all life's lessons—but to die ;
Peevish and spiteful, doting, hard to please,
Commending every time, save times like these ;
Crazed, querulous, forsaken, half-forgot,
Expires unwept—is buried—let him rot !

BYRON ; *Hints from Horace*, pp. 66, 67.

If we were to ask a series of questions on the great events of our history and national progress, the answers would come out, as it regarded the two classes, with a singular significance. For instance :—

Who laid the foundations of our free institutions, parliaments, representation, and trial by jury ?

The old Anglo-Saxon people.

Who destroyed these to a great practical extent, and rent the soil from its ancient possessors by the introduction of feudalism ?

The aristocracy of the Danish-Normans.

Who attempted to wring the Magna Charta from King John, and failed ?

The barons.

Who won it ?

The bowmen of England, who drove John and the barons too, and their invited French king, before them, and compelled Henry III. to give them a still better charter.

Who tore the kingdom to pieces by cruel wars and wranglings for the crown, till the reign of Henry VII. ?

The aristocracy.

Who, meantime, cultivated the ground, originated trade, raised the country in wealth, strength, and respect, spite of its internal aristocratic dissonance ?

The people.

Who trembled before the Tudors, and became their instruments even to the commission of systematic murders in Scotland and at home ?

The aristocracy.

Who made the Tudor Elizabeth tremble in the midst of her haughtiness, and retract her arbitrary commands ?

The people in their parliament.

Who joined with the Stuarts to destroy the liberties of the nation, and to rule by a standing army ?

The aristocracy.

Who put down king and aristocracy, and made the first example in the world of a headless king, for the warning of bad monarchs, and the encouragement of injured nations ?

The people of England.

Who recalled the debauched Charles II. to this country, and bargained with him for their own profit and the popular wrong ?

The aristocracy.

Who again drove the Stuarts from the throne ?

The people.

Who got the credit of it ?

Seven bishops, whose "Diana of the Ephesians," the church,

was in danger by the king's plan of restoring Popery, and some dozen or two of the aristocracy, who called in the Dutch king to rule and rob him.

Who, from that time to 1815, went on spending the national funds in foreign wars, for the establishment of foreign tyrants, till the cost of bloodshed amounted to three thousand millions?

The aristocracy.

Who, meantime, raised the wind? Who ploughed and sowed, dug and hoed, spun and wove, and sailed and traded, and raised England to such a pitch of power and wealth as withstood all immediate ruin, but left an awful heap of debt to look at?

The people of England.

Who planted America?

The people.

Who lost it?

The imbecile aristocracy.

Who invented all improvements in agriculture, mechanics, and manufactures, which ingenuity produced national wealth? Who made roads, cut canals, called into knowledge and use gas and steam; built steam-engines and steam-ships; laid down railroads, and put in motion spinning-jennies and power-looms, the grand sources of our national ascendancy?

THE PEOPLE.

Who invented the National Debt?

THE ARISTOCRACY!!!

But to put the matter to the test of plain and literal fact, take from your annals the names of those who have been, in every track of knowledge or of life, the real builders and founders of the national glory, and see whence they spring:—

COMMONERS.

Great Lawyers.
Ranulph de Glanville
Thomas Lyttleton
Edward Coke, knighted
Francis Bacon, made Lord
Verulam
Matthew Hale, knighted
Judge Croke, knighted
Finch, made Lord Not-
tingham
Sanders, made Lord Chief
Justice, originally a beg-
gar-boy, or foundling
George Mackenzie,
knighted
Thomas Thurlow, made a
Lord
Philip Yorke, made Lord
Hardwick

Great Lawyers.
Mr. Wedderburn, made
Lord Loughborough
Thomas Erskine, made
Lord Erskine
William Murray, made
Lord Mansfield
William Scott, made Lord
Stowell
John Scott, made Lord
Eldon
William Grant, knighted
Samuel Romilly, ditto
Mr. Law, made Lord El-
lenborough
Thomas Denman, made
Lord Denman
Henry Brougham, made
Lord Brougham
Daniel O'Connell

LORDS.

Great Lawyers.

COMMONERS.

Statesmen.

Cecil, made Lord Burleigh
Walsingham, made a Lord
Francis Bacon, ditto
Walter Raleigh, knighted
Robert Cecil, second son
of Burleigh, made Earl
of Salisbury
Sir Henry Vane, his father
made Baronet
Cromwell, a brewer
Robert Walpole, made
Earl of Orford
Henry St. John, made Earl
of Bolingbroke
Robert Harley, made Earl
of Oxford
Mr. Montague, made Earl
of Halifax
Mr. Somers, made Lord
Somers
William Pitt, made Earl
of Chatham
William Pitt, Chatham's
second son
Charles Fox
Edmund Burke
Mr. Grey, afterwards Earl
Grey. Both himself and
father were commoners
long after the com-
mencement of his career.
His father, who was a
general, was made Lord
in 1801

Patriots.

Hampden
Marvell
Milton
Pym
Prynne
Vane
Cromwell
Col. Hutchinson
Col. Lilburne
Algernon Sidney
1688.
Henry Sidney, made Lord
Sidney
James Dalrymple, made
Lord Stair

Statesmen.

Mr. Jenkinson, made Earl
of Liverpool. His father
was first Earl, but
neither father nor son
were made Lords till the
son was sixteen years
of age
George Canning, son of
an actress
Mr. Addington, made
Viscount Sidmouth
Nicolas Vansittart, made
Lord Bexley
Robert Stewart, made
Lord Castlereagh, 1797,
as a reward for his cor-
ruption of the Irish
Parliament; and thus
effecting the Union
Robert Peel, baronet and
cotton-spinner
Arthur Wellesley, made
Duke of Wellington
James Graham, Baronet
Henry Goulburn, Baronet
Thomas Spring Rice, made
Lord Monteagle
Mr. Gladstone, merchant
Poulet Thompson, mer-
chant, made Lord
Sydenham

Patriots.

Thomas Osbourne, who
had been created Lord
Danby in 1674, im-
peached in 1678 for
public dishonesty, but
on the revolution made
Marquis of Casemar-
then 1689, and Duke of
Leeds 1694.
Mr. Montague, made Bar-
on Halifax in 1700,
and Earl in 1714.

LORDS.

Statesmen.

Lord North
Lord John Russell, a
younger son
Lord Stanley, son of Earl
of Derby
Lord Melbourne, son of
Peniston Lamb, a new-
made Lord
Lord Palmerston
Lord Morpeth, son of Earl
of Carlisle
Lord Normandy

Patriots.

Lord Falkland
Lord Russell
1688.
Earl of Devonshire, made
Duke
Earl of Manchester, made
Duke 1719
Lord Drumlanrig, son of
the Duke of Queens-
berry

All these patriots of 1688 were either doubtful patriots, or took care to be extremely well paid for their patriotism, and were most active in securing to themselves, by the change, power and property.

Muir, Palmer, Skirving, Margarott, and Gerard,

Scottish and English reformers—who, for the advocacy of reform, were most brutally treated by the Scotch judges of the High Court of Justiciary. Muir and Palmer were sent to the hulks, and kept in chains amongst the felons. They were all transported for fourteen years, and perished by various melancholy fates. Margarott was the only one that returned to this country. Such was the state of malignant despotism and brutal subservience of the judges of that time, 1793-4, in this country, that the Lord Justice Clerk said right out on these trials, that *landed property only* had any right to be represented, and called all who had only *personal property*, a rabble. "In this country," he said, "the government is made up of the *landed interest*, which alone has a right to be represented; as for the rabble, who have nothing but personal property, what hold has the nation on them? They may pack up all their property on their backs, and leave the country in the twinkling of an eye." And Judge Swinton added, "If punishment adequate to the crime of sedition were to be sought for, it could not be found in our law, now that *torture was happily abolished!*"

Colonel Borek.
John Frost.

| Thomas Paine. |

This last gentleman, a lawyer in good practice, was tried, and condemned in 1793 to be struck off the roll of attorneys, imprisoned six months, bound in recognizances, and, in fact, utterly ruined, for merely saying, in reply to a question put purposely to him in the Percy Coffee-house, "Whether he were not for equality and no kings?" To which he answered that he was. This political martyr for so innocent a use of the freedom of speech was lately living, if not still, at a very advanced age. He was ably but fruitlessly defended by Thomas Erskine, who advanced in his speech doctrines quite as bold as those for which his client was ruthlessly condemned. It was on this trial that Erskine declared that if it were treason to speak against one part of the constitution, it was so of another; and yet, he added, a man might go into every coffee-house between Charing-cross and the Exchange, and decry the popular part of the constitution, and fear no prosecution. He declared that it was the notorious language of the highest men both in and out of parliament, "to justify the alienation of the popular part of the government from the principle and spirit of its trust and office, and to prognosticate the ruin and downfall of England from a free and uncorrupted representation of the great body of the people."

COMMONERS.

Patriots.
Robert Burns, ploughman
and poet. As a reward
for his genius promoted
to be an exciseman; but
who left to his nation
the proud sentiment,
"A man 's a man for
a' that."

Patriots.
Thomas Erskine, made
Lord Erskine
Horne Tooke
Hardy
Thelwall

LORDS.

Patriots.

The imprisonment, trial, and triumph of the three last bold men is matter of universal knowledge.

William Cobbett:

This extraordinary man, who, by the force of his native talent, had raised himself from a ploughboy to a senator, and, far higher, to be the political enlightener and animator of his country, was most savagely persecuted by the government of the time. He was twice arrested and imprisoned. On the second occasion, which was for protesting against the inhuman barbarities practised in flogging some militia men, he was fined 1000*l.*, imprisoned two years in Newgate, and compelled to give security for his good behaviour for seven years in a bond of 300*l.*, with two other securities of 100*l.* each. The total liberties of the country being at length annihilated by the passing of Castlereagh's Six Acts, so that any man could, at the minister's pleasure, be seized and imprisoned without hope or power of trial, he fled to America, and remained there till 1819.

Leigh Hunt:

Editor of the Examiner; prosecuted and imprisoned for adding to some fulsome newspaper adulation of the Prince Regent, as "An Adonis," the words "of fifty." An Adonis of fifty! Grave offence!

William Hone:

Another self-raised man, whose amazing powers confounded and defeated the whole judicial bench when brought to trial for his Political Parodies; and are said to have completed what ill-health had begun, the death of Lord Ellenborough, who had never met with so tough a subject before. His Parodies made ridiculous the imbecile despots, Castlereagh, Sidmouth, and Vansittart, and did essential service to the cause of liberty, and this triumph over the judges and ministers awakened a most salutary enthusiasm in the public mind.

Sir Francis Burdett:

This man is a striking instance of the effect of aristocracy. As the enthusiasm of youth faded in him, aristocratic associations and associates took fast and growing hold on him, and from the most ultra of radicals, even to the proposal of universal

suffrage and annual parliaments, at a time that no one, except Henry Hunt, supported him in the whole House of Commons, he renegaded to the most ultra of conservatives.

COMMONERS.		LORDS.
<i>Patriots.</i>	<i>Patriots.</i>	<i>Patriots.</i>
Joseph Hume	Mr., afterwards Lord, Grey	Lord King
Colonel Peronet Thompson	Mr. Lambton	Lord Holland
Major Cartwright	Mr. Lambton, jun., afterwards Lord Durham,	Lord John Russell
Dr. Bowring		Lord Lansdowne
Joseph Sturge		Lord Melbourne

These lords, with Grey and the Lambtons in the second column, are or were patriots of a gentle whiggish kind, who had patriotic breathings enough to make them worthy of a mention, but of such an aristocratic stamp, that they never forgot to "stand by their order," like Lord Grey; and the measure of their patriotism is stereotyped in the thing called "The Reform Bill."

COMMONERS.		LORDS.
<i>Philosophers.</i>	<i>Philosophers.</i>	<i>Philosophers.</i>
Roger Bacon, monk	Halley, first predictor of the return of a comet.	
Francis Bacon, lawyer, made Lord.	Priestley	
Thomas Hobbes, a poor private tutor.	Harley	
Edward Herbert, made Lord of Cheshbury	Price	
Isaac Newton	Henry Home, a lawyer, made Lord as Lord Kames	
Flamsteed, astronomer.	David Hume	
John Locke, originally a poor medical man.	Thomas Reid	
Robert Boyle, seventh and youngest son of the Earl of Cork	Dugald Stewart	
	Jeremy Bentham	
<i>Great Churchmen and Religionists.—Monks.</i>	<i>Great Churchmen and Religionists.—Chiefly be-bishoped Clergymen.</i>	<i>Great Churchmen and Religionists.</i>
Pelagius	Fox	
St. Patrick	Knox	
St. Ninian	Bancroft	
St. David	Parker	
St. Dunstan	Whitgift	
Thomas à Beckett	Barry	
<i>Be-bishoped Clergymen.</i>	More	
Wolsey	Cudworth	
Cranmer	Hall	
Latimer	Owen	
Ridley	Burnet	
Gardiner	Leighton	
Abbot	Barrow	
Laud, son of a country tradesman	Tillotson	
Usher	Secker	
Andrews	Hoadley	
Jeremy Taylor	Potter	
	Stillingfleet.	

COMMONERS.

Great Churchmen and Religionists.—Be-bishoped Clergymen.

Samuel Clarke
Horsley
Warburton
Sherlock
Porteus
Van Mildert

Quakers.

George Fox
William Penn
Robert Barclay

Poets.

Aneurin
Robert Longland, as
Peira Plowman
JEFFREY CHAUCER
John Gower
Lydgate, monk of Bury
Thomas Buckhurst, made
Lord Sockville
RAMMUN SPENCER
Skelton
Haywood
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
Christopher Marlowe
Philip Massinger
Beaumont
Fletcher
Ford
Ben Jonson
Robert Shirley
Drummond of Hawthornden
Dr. Donne
David Cowley
Robert Herrick
George Herbert
Carew
Lovelace
Wither
John Dryden
Otway, dramatist
Lee, ditto
Wycherley, ditto
ALEXANDER POPE
William Dunbar
David Lindsay, knighted
in 1530
Thomas Wyatt, knighted
Chapman, dramatist and
translator of Homer
Warner
Drayton
Daniel
Giles and Phineas Fletcher
Fairfax, translator of
Tasso

Great Churchmen and Religionists.

Richard Baxter, Nonconformist
Dr. Doddridge, Independent
John and Charles Wesley, Methodists
Whitfield, Calvinistic Methodist
Dr. A. Clarke, Methodist
Dr. Priestley, Unitarian
Dr. Lardner, ditto
Robert Hall, Baptist

Poets.

John Davies, lawyer, knighted
William Davenant, ditto
John Denham, ditto
John Suckling, ditto
Andrew Marvel
JOHN MILTON
Edmund Waller
Butler, author of *Hudibras*
Matthew Prior
Congreve, dramatist
Vanbrugh, ditto
Farquhar, ditto
Chibber, ditto
Nicholas Rowe, dramatist
Thomson—"Seasons"
Allen Ramsay
Collier
Gray
Shenstone
Dr. Beattie
Churchill, satirist
Falconer—"Shipwreck"
Joseph Warton
Thomas Warton
Mason
Chatterton
Macpherson—"Ossian"
Anstey
WILLIAM COWPER
William Gifford, satirist, shoemaker, and Quarterly Reviewer
Sotheby
Lisle Bowles
George Crabbe
Thomas Moore
Walter Savage Landor
Young, author of "Night Thoughts"
Parnel
Savage
Dyer
Blair

LORDS OR LADIES.

Great Churchmen and Religionists.

Lady Huntingdon

Poets.

Lord Surrey
Lord Byron
Earl of Carlisle
Lord Thurlow
Lord Strangford, translator of Camoens
Lord Leigh
Lord John Manners
Lady Stuart Wortley
Lady Flora Hastings

COMMONERS.

Poets.
 Mark Akenside
 Michael Armstrong
 Oliver GOLDSMITH
 Douglas, dramatist
 Mrs. Cowley, ditto
 Richard Camberland, ditto
 Coleman, ditto
 Richard Sheridan, ditto
 Dr. Darwin
 Miss Seward
 George Hayley
 Dr. Walcott; Peter Pindar
 ROBERT BURNS
Samuel Rogers
Samuel Coleridge
Robert Southey
 WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
 WALTER SCOTT
 Thomas Campbell
 James Hogg, Ettrick
 Shepherd
 Leigh Hunt
 PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
 John Keats
 Kirke White, son of a
 butcher
 James Montgomery
 William Proctor, Barry
 Cornwall
 Henry Milman
 Joanna Baillie
 Felicia Hemans
 Mary Howitt
 William Howitt
 Richard Howitt

Actors and Actresses.
 David Garrick
 John Kemble
 Charles Kemble
 Edmund Kean
 Mrs. Siddons
 Fanny Kemble
 Macready
 Liston

Poets.
 Ebenezer Elliott
 Alaric A. Watts
 Thomas Babington
 Macaulay
 Dr. Bowring
 George Croly
 ALFRED TENNYSON
 Serjeant Talfourd, dra-
 matist
 Sheridan Knowles, dra-
 matist
 Allan Cunningham, stone-
 cutter
 John Wilson
 Grahame
 Tennant
 Robert Bloomfield, shoe-
 maker
 Egerton Brydges, made
 baronet 1814
 Caroline Southey, born
 Bowles
 Letitia Maclean, born
 London
 Elizabeth Barrett
 Hon. Elizabeth Norton
 T. K. Hervey
 J. H. Wiffen
 Robert Browning
 Henry Monckton Milnes
 Thomas Keble
 John Clare, peasant
 Thomas Miller, basket-
 maker
 Bernard Barton

Actors and Actresses.
 Samuel Foote
 Macklin
 Miss O'Neill
 Charles Matthews
 Charles Matthews, jun.
 Madame Vestris
 Farren
 Miss Kelly

LORDS OR LADIES.

*Poets.**Actors and Actresses.*

DISTINGUISHED AUTHORS AND LEARNED MEN.

COMMONERS.

Authors, &c.
 St. Aldhelm
 Erigena
 Alcuin
 Duns Scotus
 John Wycliffe, translator
 of the Bible
 Tyndal, do.
 Richard Hooker
 Camden, antiquary
 Walter Raleigh, knighted

Authors, &c.
 William Occam
 Robert Grosteste
 Roger Ascham
 Thomas More, knighted
 Philip Sidney, do.
 George Buchanan
 John Leland
 John Hales
 William Chillingworth
 Thomas Browne, knighted

LORDS OR LADIES.

Authors, &c.
 Lord Lyttleton
 Lord Orford, Horace Wal-
 pole
 Lord Chesterfield
 Lady Mary Stuart Wort-
 ley Montagu

COMMONERS.

Authors, &c.

Burton, author of "Anatomy of Melancholy"
 William Temple, made baronet
 John Ray, naturalist
 William Jones, knighted
 Hannah More
 William Godwin
 William Hazlitt
 Mrs. Radcliffe
 Mrs. Opie
 Miss Edgeworth
 Horne Tooke
 Dr. Johnson, son of a poor bookseller
 Dr. Parr
 Gilbert Wakefield
 Tyrwhitt, critic
 Porson, do.
 Chalmers, historian
 Thomas Paine, breeches-maker and political philosopher
 Watson, bishop and philosopher
 John Bunyan, tinker
 Isaac Walton, draper
 Charles Cotton
 John Evelyn
 Thomas Burnet, author of the "Theory of the Earth"
 Jonathan Swift
 Joseph Addison
 Richard Steele, knighted
 Dr. Bentley, critic
 Daniel de Foe
 Dr. Isaac Watts
 Fielding
 Richardson
 Sterne
 Smollet
 Edmund Burke
 Mary Wolstonecraft
 Miss Burney
 Mrs. Carter
 Mrs. Barbauld
 Mrs. Chapone
 Mrs. Macaulay
 Malthus
 Junius
 Harris, philologist
 Monboddo, critic
 Home, made Lord Kames, critic
 Blair, rhetorician, &c.
 Hawkins, music, &c.
 Dr. Burney, do.
 Chandler, antiquary
 Barrington, legal commentator
 Stevens, dramatic do.

Authors, &c.

Pegge, antiquary
 Farmer, do.
 Grose, do.
 Gough, do.
 Pennant, zoologist
 Gilbert White, naturalist
 Henry Mackenzie, novelist, &c.
 Miss Ferrier, novelist
 Miss Austen, do.
 Elizabeth Smith
 John Foster, essayist
 William Cobbett
 Miss Sophia Lee
 Charlotte Smith
 Mrs. Inchbald
 Miss Jane Porter
 Miss Anna Maria Porter
 Hawksworth, miscellaneous
 Home, do.
 Melmoth, do.
 Franklin, do.
 Dr. John Hunter, anatomist
 Dr. William Hunter, do.
 Dr. Percy, author of the "Reliques of English Poetry"
 Charles Lamb
 Sidney Smith, critic
 Jeffery, do.
 Henry Brougham, do., made a Lord of and spoiled.
 T. B. Macaulay, critic
 Dr. Chalmers
 Lady Morgan, Miss Owen-son
 Mrs. Gore
 Mrs. Trollope
 Mrs. Hoffman
 Mrs. S. C. Hall
 Mrs. Austin, translator
 Miss Lawrence
 Miss Sinclair
 William Howitt, various
 Mrs. William Howitt, do.
 Douglas Jerrold
 R. H. Horne, critic, &c.
 Thomas Carlisle
 Dr. Maginn
 Dr. Southwood Smith
 John Britton, antiquary
 Mrs. Somerville
 Mrs. Jameson
 Bulwer
 Charles Knight
 Harriet Martineau
 Mr. S. C. Hall

LORDS OR LADIES.

Authors, &c.

COMMONERS.

Authors, &c.
 John Rickman, architect
 Swainson, naturalist
 Yarrell, ditto
 David Brewster, natural
 philosopher, knighted
 Michael Faraday, philo-
 sophical chemist
 Maturin, novelist, &c.
 G. P. R. James
 John Bailem
 John Galt
 J. G. Lockhart
 James Smith
 Horace Smith
 Henry Lever
 Morier

Authors, &c.
 Carleton
 Lover
 Charles Dickens
 W. H. Ainsworth
 Captain Melvin
 Captain Basil Hall
 Captain Marryatt
 Theodore Hook
 Dr. Dalton, chemical phi-
 losopher
 Astley Cooper, surgeon,
 made baronet
 Thomas Cooper, Chartist
 and author of "The
 Purgatory of Suicides"
 &c. &c.

LORDS OR LADIES.

Authors, &c.

Historians.

St. Gildas
 St. Nennius
 Venerable Bede
 Odoericus Vitalis
 Matthew of Paris
 John of Salisbury
 Matthew of Westminster
 Peter Heylin
 Mr. Hyde, made Lord
 Clarendon
 Rushdon
 Rymer
 David Hume
 Tobias Smollett
 Dr. M'Crie
 Dr. Robertson
 Whittaker, historian of
 Manchester
 Warner, history of Ireland
 Ireland, ditto ditto
 Mitford, history of
 Greece
 Gillies, history of ditto,
 Scotland, &c.
 Pinkerton, history of
 Iceland, the Goths, &c.
 Hallam
 Turner

Historians.

Anthony à Wood
 Knowles
 Daniels
 May, history of the Long
 Parliament
 Chambers, chronicler
 Hall, ditto
 Grafton, ditto
 Hollinshed, ditto
 Baker, ditto
 Stowe, ditto
 Speed, ditto
 Edward Gibbon
 David Dalrymple, made
 baronet
 John Dalrymple
 Macpherson
 Stuart, history of England
 and Scotland
 Granger, biographical his-
 tory of England
 Orme, history of India
 Holwell, ditto
 Roscoe
 Tytler
 Mill
 Lingard
 &c. &c.

Historians.

Lord John Russell
 Lord Nugent, life of
 Hampden
 Lord Mahon, history of
 England

GREAT COMMANDERS, NAVAL AND MILITARY.

Great Commanders.

Francis Drake, knighted
 John Hawkins, ditto
 Walter Raleigh, ditto
 Martin Frobisher
 Thomas Cavendish
 Robert Blake
 Oliver Cromwell
 Henry Ireton, general
 John Lambert, ditto

Great Commanders.

John Harrison, ditto
 HORATIO NELSON, made
 Lord Nelson
 Admiral Collingwood,
 made Lord Collingwood
 Admiral Hawke, made
 Lord Toulon
 Admiral Hood, made
 Lord Bridport

Great Commanders.

Lord Howard of Effing-
 ham
 Lord Fairfax

COMMONERS.

Great Commanders.
 Admiral Hotham, made
 Lord Hotham
 Admiral Duncan, made
 Lord Camperdown
 Commodore Anson, made
 Lord Anson
 Admiral Byng, made Lord
 Torrington
 Admiral Pellew, made
 Earl of Exmouth
 John Churchill, made
 Duke of Marlborough
 General Wolfe
 Robert Clive, made Lord
 Powis, son of a country
 clergyman
 Admiral Rodney, made
 Lord Rodney

Great Commanders.
 Admiral Jervis, made
 Lord St. Vincent
 Admiral Howe, made
 Lord Howe
 Arthur Wellesley, made
 Duke of Wellington
 General Hill, made Lord
 Hill
 General Abercrombie,
 widow made baroness
 General Elliott, made
 Lord Heathfield
 Sidney Smith, made
 baronet
 Admiral Codrington
 Commodore Napier

LORDS.

Great Commanders.

ARTISTS, ARCHITECTS, ETC.

Artists, Architects, &c.
 WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM,
 a poor boy
 William Caxton, intro-
 ducer of printing
 William Bird, musical
 composer
 Thomas Tallis, ditto
 INIGO JONES
 Richard Farrant, musical
 composer
 Henry Hawes, ditto
 Samuel Cooper, printer
 Thomas Simon, cotner
 CHRISTOPHER WREN
 Michael Wright, painter
 Grinling Gibbons, sculptor
 and carver
 Henry Purcell, musical
 composer
 WILLIAM HOGARTH
 John Vanbrugh
 James Gibbs, architect of
 St. Martin's Church
 William Kent, landscape
 gardener
 JOSHUA REYNOLDS,
 knighted
 Croft, musical composer
 Greene, ditto
 Boyce, ditto
 Barry, painter
 Wilson, ditto
 Gainsborough, ditto
 Opie, ditto, found by Dr.
 Wileot in a saw-pit
 Woollet, engraver
 Strange, ditto
 Browne, ditto
 Byrne, ditto

Artists, Architects, &c.
 Rooker, engraver
 Major, ditto
 M'Ardell, ditto
 Watson, ditto
 Thomas Bewick, restorer
 of wood-cutting
 John Bewick, wood en-
 graver
 Kent, musical composer
 Nares, ditto
 Hays, ditto
 Saunders, ditto
 Arnold, ditto
 Cooke, ditto
 Arne, ditto
 Linley, ditto
 Jackson, ditto
 Webbe, ditto
 Danby, ditto
 Telford, engineer
 Chambers, architect
 Wyatt, ditto
 Northcote, painter
 Westall, ditto
 Stothard, ditto
 Morland, ditto
 Allan, ditto
 Raeburn, ditto
 Bacon, sculptor
 Nollekens, ditto
 Banks, ditto
 Flaxman, ditto
 Boydell, engraver
 Heath, ditto
 Sharpe, ditto
 Ryland, ditto
 Reynolds, ditto
 Daniel, ditto
 Blake, ditto

Artists, Architects, &c.

COMMONERS.

Artists, Architects, &c.
 John Rennie, engineer and
 bridge architect
 John Scane, architect,
 knighted
 Nash, architect
 Barry, ditto
 Tate
 Sandby, water colour
 painter
 Glover, ditto
 Turner, ditto
 Hespy, ditto
 Barret, ditto
 Wild, ditto
 Pugin, ditto
 Uwins, painter
 Copley Fielding, ditto
 Robson, ditto
 Prout, ditto
 Bonington, ditto
 Lewis, ditto
 Hunt, ditto
 Stephanoff, ditto
 Cattermole, ditto
 Harding, ditto
 Hilton, ditto
 Eity, ditto
 Haydon, ditto
 Briggs, ditto
 Lawrence, ditto
 Phillips, ditto
 Shae, ditto
 Pickersgill, ditto
 Wilkie, ditto
 Mulready, ditto
 Turner, ditto
 Calcut, ditto
 Collins, ditto
 Edwin Landseer, ditto
 Thomas Landseer, ditto
 Martin, ditto
 Danby, ditto
 Howard, ditto
 Cooper, ditto

Artists, Architects, &c.

Bone, ditto
 Maclean, ditto
 Stone, ditto
 Hofland, ditto
 Herbert, ditto
 Margaret Gillies
 Westmacot, sculptor
 Chantry, ditto
 Bailey, ditto
 Behnes, ditto
 Lough, ditto
 Thom, ditto
 Calder Marshall, ditto
 &c. &c. &c.
 Le Keux, engraver
 Woolnoth, ditto
 Cooper, ditto
 Finden, ditto
 Pye, ditto
 Charles Heath, ditto
 William Millar, ditto
 Burnet, ditto
 Clint, ditto
 &c. &c. &c.
 Harvey, wood engraver
 S. Williams, ditto
 T. Williams, ditto
 Mary Ann Williams, ditto
 Thompson, ditto
 Orrin Smith, ditto
 Evans, ditto
 Nesbit, ditto
 Landels, ditto
 Vizetelly, ditto
 Bramston, ditto
 Wright, ditto
 Bagge, ditto
 Bishop, musical composer
 Balfe, ditto
 George Smart, ditto,
 knighted
 Grainger of Newcastle,
 architect

LORNS.

Artists, Architects, &c.
 None!

FOUNDERS AND INVENTORS.

COMMONERS.

Founders and Inventors.

Paterson, founder of the Bank of England
 Gunter, inventor of Logarithmical scale
 Arkwright, introducer of the water-power for spinning
 cotton
 Watt, improver of the steam engine
 Bolton, ditto, and of coining
 Hargrave, inventor of the spinning-jenny
 Compton, inventor of the mule-jenny for cotton-spin-
 ning
 Brindley, constructor of canals, locks, &c.
 Smeaton, engineer, builder of Eddystone Lighthouse
 John Lombe, introducer of silk-throwing, and builder
 of the first silk mill in England, at Derby

LORNS.

Founders and Inventors.

COMMONERS.

Founders and Inventors.

Lee, inventor of the stocking-loom
 Strutt, improver of the stocking-loom
 William Ged, inventor of stereotype printing
 Josiah Wedgwood, improver of earthenware
 Harrison, improver of the chronometer
 James Gregory, inventor of the reflecting telescope
 Dr. Roebuck, improver of iron-founding. Founder of Carron Works
 Napier, inventor of logarithms
 Dolland, inventor of the Achromatic telescope
 Brown, founder of the Brunonian system of medicine
 Bakewell, improver of sheep and cattle
 Cully, do., and of agriculture
 Arthur Young, do.
 T. W. Coke of Holkham, made Lord Leicester
 Miller, Taylor, and Symington, first starters of a steam boat on Dalswinton Lake, Scotland
 Henry Bell, first runner of a steamer for passengers on the Clyde
 Trevithic and Vivian, first runners of a steam-engine on a tram-road at Merthyr-Tydvil
 Tilloch, first effectual introducer of stereotype printing
 Coit, improver of iron-founding
 Huntsman of Attercliffe, discoverer of the art of converting cast-iron into steel
 Dr. Edmund Cartwright, inventor of the power-loom
 Robert Frost, inventor or great improver of the lace-loom, and machinery for wool-combing
 Holmes, inventor of point-net
 Wissett, promoter of silk-growing in Bengal, and of silk-throwing in England
 Philip James Knight, great improver of the Norwich shawls
 Watt, Henry, and Tennant, introducers of chemical bleaching
 Bell, inventor of the cylindrical machine for printing calicoes
 M'Adam, introducer of a new system of road-making
 Sir Humphry Davy, inventor of the safety-lamp, and author of many chemical discoveries
 Hutton, inventor of the Huttonian theory of the earth
 Dr. Birkbeck, founder of Mechanics' Institutes
 Robert Raikes, founder of Sunday schools
 Dr. Jenner, introducer of vaccination
 Bell and Lancaster, founders of the school-systems bearing their names
 Rev. Mr. Bailley, of Sheffield, founder of People's Colleges

Discoverers.

John Cabot and Sebastian Cabot, father and son, the first discoverers of Newfoundland, and the mainland of America
 Martin Frobisher, explorer of the Arctic coast of America, and discoverer of the straits bearing his name
 Francis Drake, discoverer of New Albion
 Thomas Cavendish, discoverer of various portions of South America, and the South Seas; and circumnavigator.

Y

LORDS.

Founders and Inventors.

Earl of Rosse, improver of the telescope

As agriculturists, the nobility have shown themselves more laudable than in any other character; and we may name the Duke of Portland, Lord Althorpe, Lord Western, and many other zealous cattle breeders and farmers; but rather following the Bakewells, Cullys, &c., than leading the way in invention

Discoverers.

Duke of Norfolk, discoverer of the hitherto unknown properties of curry-powder, by which roast-beef, plum-pudding, and such heavy and dyspeptic articles of food are likely to grow eventually out of use, to the signal relief of mankind

COMMONERS.

Discoverers.

John Davis, discoverer of Davis's Straits; explorer of the coasts of Greenland, Iceland, &c.

Commodore Byron, discoverer of the Isles of Danger and Duke of York's Island

Captain Wallis, discoverer of the Island of Otaheite

Captain Cook, discoverer of New South Wales, New Caledonia, Sandwich Isles, and rediscoverer of New Zealand

Harvey, discoverer of the circulation of the blood

Dr. Black, discoverer of latent heat

Bradley, discoverer of the aberration of light

William Murdoch, a Cornish man, who first used gas to light his own house

Watt and Boulton, first lit the Soho with it

Sandby, introducer of water-colour painting

LORDS.

Discoverers.

In these lists it will be observed that little chronological order has been observed. The solitary appearance of a lord now and then made it necessary that this *usus naturæ* should appear in some degree of parallel with his own times, while there are many other persons out of theirs. This, however, is of little consequence.

It will be seen also in these catalogues, that there are specimens of a certain amphibious sort of animals, called knights or baronets, who, though not acknowledged by the constitution as more than commoners, are, by property, by a degree of rank, and often still more by association, birth, education, or interests, mixed up regularly with the aristocracy of the upper house. I have been a good deal puzzled what to do with these intermediates, on which side of the page to throw them. But when I came to see that of these the number who are born baronets, or even to the certainty of a baronetcy, is so very insignificant, not probably making altogether half-a-dozen, I resolved to stand by the constitution, and rank them with the people, out of whom the majority of them spring; seeing, moreover, that the people in the bulk, and in the best sense, are all that portion of the population of this now civilised and educated country who are not bound up hand and foot with the Hospital of Incurables. By this largest of all classes, we mean the great people of enlightened England. But take even these, take even the younger sons of lords, and what a scene it still is! We say

“Look on this picture, and on that!”

And what do we see? Immense columns of stirring, active, able men, inventing, contriving, constructing and building up the nation in arts, sciences, discoveries, laws, colonies, and all manner of new and great things. Nay, the numbers we have

taken are but a mere fragment; any reader knows that the very names of the whole body of meritorious men and women of England would make a large volume.

In the very class of statesmen, which one would imagine to have a preponderance of "the hereditary legislators," there is scarcely a man who began his career as a lord, whose powers or fame are above mediocrity—purest mediocrity. The strength, the active and impelling power, is still rising up from the rich native soil of the people. They are the Cecils, the Bacons, the Walpoles, the Pitts, the Foxes, the Burkes, the Cannings, who make the statesmanship of their age. There is not a born lord who can be named for any great statesmanlike genius; there is not a single born lord by name, till we come to Lord John Russell, Lords Lansdowne, Stanley, and one or two more; and of all this class, perhaps Lord Palmerston is the only one who will leave traces of an able statesman behind him. Amongst the great lawyers there is not one born lord; they all rose out of the popular mass. In patriotism, Lord Fairfax and Lord Russell, who was beheaded by Charles II., stand nearly alone in the whole great list, as peers who are free from the suspicion of patriotism for personal objects. Amongst philosophers there is no name of a born lord. Amongst great churchmen and religionists, the fact is the same, though they have the whole church as a heritage; the distinguished are, almost to a man, those who are sprung of "earth's best blood," the blood of the middle classes. In the mighty catalogue of the poets, the name of Lord Byron is the only one that stands out in his class as a first-rate man, and how he came to prove such is easily explained by the fact that, though born to the prospect of a peerage, he was born poor, and left to wander amid the wild majesty of mountains in his boyhood, instead of being swathed and swaddled in aristocratic luxury. He made acquaintance with nature before he knew too much of man, and it unfolded the inward eye, and developed that power which is clogged and overlaid by aristocratic ease. But as he grew up, and had passed through the aristocratic hot-beds of Harrow and Cambridge, and entered the aristocratic circles of London, he acquired so much of the spirit of "the order," that his principles and his feelings were for ever after at variance. His principles were thoroughly radical, his feelings were haughty and aristocratic.

Look on through the great commanders, and the fact is still the same. They are the men who have become lords by their deeds, not those who have done great deeds because they were lords. They were the Drakes, the Blakes, the Wolfes, the Abercrombies, and such like. Marlborough rose from the people. Wellington, though the son of a lord, was a younger son, and

had to make his way. Lord Howard of Effingham as admiral, and Lord Fairfax as general, are the only regular born lords that have cut much figure in their line, and yet even in their day how far did the men of the people soar above them !

Amongst the artists, inventors, &c., we hear of no lords. These are all of the class who have to strive. In thoroughly bred and titled and lordly aristocracy the *striving principle* is destroyed by the artificiality of life and entail of estate, and indolence and effeminacy are the certain results. The true nobles, the philosophers, poets, philosophical statesmen, artists, inventors, and great patriots,—the eternal nobles, who are not ennobled by their country, but ennoble it,—these are all strivers and workers, and hence it is that they awake the divinity within them, and grow more and more in power, in spirit, in beneficence, the benefactors of mankind. They assimilate daily to the great Father of *their order*—"My Father," said Christ, "worketh hitherto, and I work." They who cease to work, and cease to have a motive to it, cease thus to resemble the great Father of all life and honour. Here lies the secret, that in them life is inert, and barren of genius and aspiration. They are the people, the *Terræ Filii*, who are at the same time the *Cœli Filii*. Like Antæus, they draw fresh strength from every daily touch of their native earth, because the earth is embraced and encompassed by the heavens and the spirit of God. Our aristocracy are like parasitical plants ; their roots are not in the earth, but in the heads of other people. They boast of their high station, and that is another characteristic of the parasite. The parasite grows not on the ground ; they are the oak, the pine, the cedar, and the lofty palm which do that, and are the glory of creation. The parasite truly occupies a lofty station, for it is generally on the broad shoulders, or on the very crown of these giants of the wood. Aloft it grows, perhaps a hundred feet above the sturdy roots of the oak or the tropical banana, yet it is still essentially a *dwarf* or *creeper*. The mistletoe on the oak is a scrubby and crooked bush ; the parasitical creepers of the tropical forests are but entangling cords and strings which, stretching from tree to tree, obstruct alike the free foot of man, and light, air, and life. They clasp the columnar trunks and branches of the trees with tightening coil on coil ; they impede the circulation of their juices, and they perish. Above, hang perhaps parasitical blossoms of great beauty, but all beneath is rottenness and decay. Such is the gay and aspiring, but fatal nature of an aristocracy, parasitical in all its qualities. But the people, drawing at once vigour from the earth beneath and from the heaven above, put out everlasting evidences of growth and

fruitfulness, and the oaks of genius dart their roots into the flintiest rocks of poverty, and lift their branches high above the crowd.

Never let the glorious truth be forgotten, that *the good and the salvation of the world* always come, and always have come, *from the HUT*. Christ came thence; the patriarchs, the prophets, and apostles came thence; the greatest sages and philosophers, the true founders and builders of national wealth and glory—of the power and the happiness of man, have come thence in all ages.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FINAL APPEAL.

“Arise! awake! or be for ever fallen!”—MILTON.

FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN—

What Dr. Franklin, in his “Poor Richard’s Almanack,” said to his countrymen, I say now to you:—

“I send you here a little book
For you to look upon,
That you may see your father’s face
Now he is dead and gone.”

Your father’s face is the face of the people of England in all past ages of their country’s history, from the first day that they began to strive for national liberty, till they drove out bad kings and nobles, and established the constitution of 1688. They established it, but you have lost it. How you lost it this history tells. It is a grave fault to have betrayed that glorious trust reposed in you—the guardianship of the liberties, and with it the advance and the happiness of posterity. By this betrayal you have already inflicted on yourselves, on millions of the poorer portion of yourselves, unutterable wants, wrongs, and miseries; and these wants, wrongs, and miseries must continue, and will multiply themselves grievously, till you have resumed this sacred trust, by restoring the popular portion of the constitution.

Look back, then, fellow-countrymen, and reflect well and solemnly, by what means it is that you have lost your birthright, “the noblest inheritance of mankind,” which, in the words of

Blackstone, "posterity will demand at your hands." Is it by some national defect of character that you have lost it? Or is it by a generous, too trusting disposition, in itself a failing, though a noble one? Or is it not, in combination with this, owing to the circumstance, that while you have been eagerly occupied in your trade, your foreign commerce, your founding and establishing of colonies, your manufactures, your ships, your steamers and railroads, and in all the arts and inventions that are required to raise and conduct such great and multifarious concerns to success, your cunning adversaries, in the guise of your friends and legislators, have had nothing to do but to fix their undivided attention on *one object*—the undermining of your constitution, and the expulsion of yourselves from it. You were told, and you believed it, and it was indeed the fact, that by your execution of Charles I. as a traitor to the constitution, and your expulsion of the infatuated despot, James II., by the free choice of a new king, and the passing of the Bill of Rights, you had fixed the constitution on the fair basis of popular power, and of a full, free, and uninfluenced representation. In the generous confidence inspired by the greatness of your deed, and the dread nature of the examples you had made of tyrants, you gave, however, occasion to the vigilant enemy to deceive you; and how they have deceived you by flatteries, while they stole the jewel of "your full, free, and uninfluenced representation," this history too well shows.

This is nothing new in the histories of nations. Aristocracies have brought every civilised country, by turns, to ruin, through their selfish intrigues and ambition. It was my intention to have gone fully and historically into this subject, but the abundance of domestic matter has denied me the necessary space. Turn your eyes, however, in what direction you please, and there lie the examples of aristocratic desolation. Who ruined the intellectual states of Greece? The aristocracy which assumed their management. Who betrayed the Roman republic, and converted it into a despotism, from which hour the national decline commenced? The aristocracy, with the Cæsars at their head. In vain the first successful traitor fell by the hand of the indignant Brutus: there were plenty of his fellows to succeed him. Rome became imperial, and perished. Turn your eyes, however, nearer to your own times, to Spain. What has reduced that country to the anarchy and misery of the present time? The pride, the luxury, the ambition, and effeminate sloth of the aristocracy. From the hour that South American gold poured into Spain, the *Hidalgoes* grew into a condition of haughty voluptuousness, that sapped the productive power of the country,

and hastened on a rapid declension of national wisdom, simplicity, and industry, from that time to the present. In this corrupt sloth, knowledge was neglected. Lord Byron, when there, found the lady and the lady's-maid equally ignorant. The *people* of Spain are universally described as a fine people. They have shown that they possess the elements of freedom and vigour in no ordinary degree, by the bloody resistance they have made to repeated tyrants, and the decision with which they at once pulled to the ground, in that so-called superstitious country, the great, corrupt system of monkery. But the nobles?—When Lord Wellington entered that country as a saviour, there could scarcely be found a man of that class who understood the duties of a good general; and as an order they were feeble, disunited, and far more greedy of English gold than desirous of the aid of English arms. They were at the same time too stupidly proud to act under the direction of our more experienced commanders. Their armies were scattered before the French like autumnal leaves, and their country might have lain under the feet of the foe for ages, had not other nations fought the battle for them. The whole class was torn to pieces with cabals and factions. They were at once ignorant, extravagant, and covered with debt; and were for ever craving after our gold, though they hated our heretical persons. From that hour it has continued the same. The Spanish people, brave and independent, find no able leaders in this corrupted class, and they have not yet advanced far enough to free themselves from them; and anarchy and continual revolutions and counter-revolutions go on. In the meantime they fight against any immediate oppressor, and when the enemy disappears, return cheerfully to the cultivation of their soil. No people live so lightly as they. They possess the soil, and are therefore always ready to rise from their temporary troubles under their fine climate. It is the government that is ruined, not the people.

Turn to Germany. There the nobles had long undermined the ancient freedom of the empire. Every petty count aspired to be a prince. He severed his little territory from the government of the whole; set up a separate independence—the right of the axe and the gallows—till the country, dissected into two thousand little states, fell a ready prey to Napoleon. He swept away a host of tyrant nobles, and the country is all the better for it.

Look again at Sweden. That country was, and is, in the hands of a swarming nobility. This nobility, at the approach of the Russians, sold the fortresses and strong positions in Finland and Pomerania for money; which thus became lost to the country

for ever, and which loss they had then the meanness to make one of the charges against their king, Gustavus IV., for which they deposed him, and adopted Bernadotte. The country is still oppressed by the incubus of this nobility, which usurps all honours, offices, and emoluments; and the nation groans and declines under them. On the contrary, Norway, though subjected to Sweden, by the arrangements of the great European powers, has with a brave spirit resisted all Swedish attempts to bring it into the same aristocratic subjection. It arose in arms, compelled a free representative government, and abolished aristocracy. The land and government are in the hands of the people; and what are the consequences? Agriculture and trade flourish, and the nation, according to Mr. Laing, presents the most singular contrast to Sweden. In the one country there is an air of neglect and decay; in the other, of comfort and prosperity. In the one, of crime and misery; in the other, of virtue and enjoyment. Mr. Laing pronounces the Norwegians to be, through this their wise and stout decision to govern themselves as they act for themselves in private life, the most happy and flourishing of European nations.

Look finally at France. Every one is familiar with the dreadful condition to which its proud and imbecile aristocracy reduced it. Every one knows in what a storm of blood and terror the oppressed people rose and took an eternal vengeance on their oppressors. If we read the accounts of France, just previous to the Revolution, we cannot avoid being struck with a terrible similarity of circumstances and features with those of our own country now. Nay, the following description by their own historian, Thiers, seems to be that of England at present.

"The condition of the country, both political and economical, was intolerable. There was nothing but privilege—privilege vested in individuals, in classes, in towns, in provinces, and even in trades and professions. Everything contributed to check industry and the natural genius of man. All the dignities of the state, civil, ecclesiastical, and military, were exclusively reserved to certain individuals. No man could take up a profession without certain titles, and the compliance with certain pecuniary conditions. Even the favours of the crown were converted into family property, so that the king could scarcely exercise his own judgment, or give any preference. Almost the only liberty left to the sovereign was that of making pecuniary gifts, and he had been reduced to the necessity of disputing with the duke of Coigny for the abolition of a useless place. Everything, then, was made immoveable property in the hands of a few, and everywhere these few resisted the many who had been despoiled.

The burdens of the state weighed on one class only. The noblesse and the clergy possessed about two-thirds of the landed property; the other third, possessed by the people, paid taxes to the king, a long list of feudal *droits* to the noblesse, tithes to the clergy, and had, moreover, to support the devastations committed by noble sportsmen and their game. The taxes upon consumption pressed upon the great multitude, and consequently on the people. The collection of these imposts was managed in an unfair and irritating manner; the lords of the soil left long arrears with impunity, but the people, upon any delay in payment, were harshly treated, arrested, and condemned to pay in their persons, in default of money to produce. The people, therefore, nourished with their labour, and defended with their blood, the higher classes of society, without being able to procure a comfortable subsistence for themselves. The townspeople, a body of citizens, industrious, educated, less miserable than the people, could nevertheless obtain none of the advantages to which they had a right to aspire, seeing that it was their industry that nourished and their talents that adorned the kingdom."

Is not that a wonderful fac-simile of our own present condition? But these circumstances produced revolution in France; what will they produce here? If they are allowed to continue, they will produce the very same thing. The French historians assert, that had the cries of the people been listened to before they grew maddened with their miseries, there would have been reform instead of revolution, and the nation would have been spared the years of unexampled horror and self-laceration through which it had to wade. Now is the same saving crisis with us! The people, the most industrious of them in town and country, starve by tens of thousands, or lead a sort of half life in incessant labour, rags, and hunger. All parts of our social system call out for relief. The manufacturer, the farmer, equally complain; the agricultural labourers are reduced to a condition worse than serfdom—to a condition of unparalleled destitution; and in some districts gangs of them are driven to the field, as we learn from parliamentary reports, under gang-masters, and are lodged promiscuously like cattle—men, women, and children, in temporary booths, fitter for beasts than human beings.

In many parts of this once happy country the agricultural labourers are getting but five and six shillings per week; while they are asked 8*l.* an acre for bits of land to set a few potatoes on. The labourers of Wiltshire have lately met by moonlight and made known that their miseries were equal to those of the labourers of Dorsetshire. What a ghastly meeting was that at

Goatacre, on the 5th of January, 1846, which will henceforth be a memorable day, from the sensation it has made throughout the kingdom! A thousand half-clad and nearly wholly starving peasantry met in a lane by moonlight, to make known their wretchedness to their queen! A hurdle supported by four stakes was their tottering platform, on which the chairman and one speaker at a time appeared. Here even famine had its advantage: the weight of tolerably fed men would have broken down the frail construction. With a few candles and rush-bottomed chairs for the reporters, this vast assembly of Englishmen and Englishwomen, under a hedge which sheltered them from the cutting wind, made known their awful condition in this land of plenty. One man, the chairman himself, showed that he got 6s. a-week to maintain a wife and two children, and paid out of that 6*l.* 10*s.* for house-rent and a little garden that would not furnish potatoes. Another earned 7*s.* 1*4d.* per week, and his family ate from 7*s.* 7*d.* to 8*s.* 8*d.* worth of bread each week, and then there were rent, clothes, shoes, potatoes, &c., &c.; and it was this—or a workhouse! These poor men were asked 8*l.* per acre for potato-land. This is as bad as in Ireland. There the poor man—and nearly all are poor—pays 7*l.*, 8*l.*, and sometimes 10*l.*, or more, for his potato-land; but they are Irish acres, one-third larger than English ones. Our aristocracy have reduced nearly all the poor of Ireland to potatoes and nothing else, and now they are fast sinking England to the state of Ireland! This cannot last!

Taxation is confessed to have reached its limits on all articles of food, clothing, or commerce; for higher imposition only produces a less consumption, and consequently a less return; and therefore, on this Ossa of indirect taxation is piled the Pelion of the income-tax. The annual revenue demanded from the people, to pay interest and office, is fifty millions—the very amount of the whole produce of our export trade. The aristocracy, blind like that of France to the signs of the times, still maintain the corn-laws, though threatened, as we have explained in a former page, with a war of tariffs all over the world, from the Zollverein of Germany to the prohibitions of Brazil and the United States, which menace our very manufacturing existence.

This is the work of our corn-law aristocracy, and the futurity which it holds out to us is most appalling. But even this is a narrow view of the mischiefs of aristocratic infliction. They have infected the whole social and moral system of England. The pride, spirit, and prejudices of aristocracy descending from this source poison and distort all other classes. We have not one aristocracy, but a multitude of them. We have a

monied, a manufacturing, a professional, and a trading aristocracy. Every order of society, from the wholesale dealer to the retail, from the large retail to the smaller, from the cabinet-maker to the hedge-carpenter, from the scavenger to the sweep, is an aristocracy to that which it deems below it.

In a pecuniary point of view there is a still worse effect of aristocratic domination. As we have shown, Englishmen do their own private business well, but they leave their public business, the most important of all, to an unbusiness-like aristocracy, who do it in a most deplorable manner. The whole of our evils result from this cause; but besides those which we have exhibited, there is one which yet demands a remark. Not content with the mass of taxation which they themselves impose, they delegate the power of taxation to whole hosts of private companies of interested speculators. Every act of parliament which authorises a gas, a water, or other company, creates a new engine of taxation, and these they have numerously created without reserving a power of control. They have given up the public to be shorn by these trading companies at their pleasure, and hence the amount of delegated and local taxation by companies and commissioners, has lately been stated in Parliament to exceed 20,000,000*l.* annually! Even the *Quarterly Review*, the stanch advocate of so many aristocratic abuses, cannot avoid breaking out on this, when tracing the origin of the turnpike riots in Wales, which were the offspring of this very evil.

"If any one," it observes, "wishes in parliament to designate the very type of negligent and perfunctory legislation, no illustration is so apposite as a turnpike bill. *Hinc illas lacrymæ.* It is simply because parliament has in times past recked nothing of turnpike bills, but let anybody who wanted one, have it, and suffered interested parties to legislate as best suited their own convenience—*delegating to irresponsible bodies the dangerous power of taxation, and omitting all control over a system peculiarly liable to abuse*—that the manifold confusions of the system have arisen. The oppressions, the vexations, the iniquities of the turnpike laws, the dearness of tolls, and the badness of roads, *eight millions of debt in England*, Rebecca and her daughters in Wales, are the legitimate results of this general default and oversight of the legislature in respect of the great national interests of its public roads. We are not now arraigning the system on the ground of its local administration, or as the advocates of centralised powers; it is enough to say that, such as it hath hitherto existed, *it has been left utterly destitute of those checks from which no delegated powers ought ultimately to be exempted*; and that it has been regulated by

no principles of equality or consistency, but private interest and hap-hazard have been the main elements of its origin and constitution."—*June, 1844, p. 146.*

But it is not merely the delegation of turnpike trusts in which this total neglect of the public interest is conspicuous; it extends to the whole frightful mass of *delegated taxation*, under which the nation groans, even more heavily than under the direct national imposts. The reviewer justly remarks that the maxim of legislators is "Every one for himself, and the public for us all!" But could this state of things possibly exist if Englishmen did their duty, if they resolved to do their own *public* business, as they do their private—to do it themselves, and not foolishly intrust it to men who have shown themselves at once so incapable and so unworthy of trust in every respect? Is there any reason why the people of England, who conduct their commerce, their manufactures, their domestic trade and affairs so admirably, should not conduct the affairs of their government just as well if they were to set about it? Is there any reason that a man who guides a ship round the world, clear of rocks and breakers, should not as well help to steer the vessel of state? Why should not he who governs a steam-engine just as well govern or assist in governing a country? The great Oxenstiern, Chancellor of Sweden, said to his son, "Mark, my son, with what a small stock of talent a nation may be governed." But our aristocracy have for ages demonstrated that they do not possess even this "small stock of talent," or of as much honesty; and the remedy for the evils they have covered us with is as clear as the daylight:—*The power must be wrested from them!*

But how? By arms? No: Englishmen know too well the dangers of revolution: they have too much to lose; and they have too much humanity. The soil of England will not willingly drink in the blood of its children, as in the barbarous ages; the remedy is alike simple and conspicuous. It lies in one joint rising and stern demand of all and every class in the country. All—manufacturer and farmer, gentleman and ploughman, merchant and shopman, artisan and labourer—all must combine, and with one dread voice, like another Cromwell, command the aristocrats to quit the people's house, and "give place to better men."

This is the simple and sole remedy. A thousand evils are complained of. "The whole head is sick and the whole heart is sore;" but "THE GREAT ROOT OF ALL" is the usurpation of the Commons House of Parliament by the aristocracy. One party tells you that the *corn-laws* must be abolished. That is true;

but to abolish that, you must come to the House of Commons, and the Commons are no longer in it;—the aristocrats are there, and you come in vain.

Another tells you that taxation is intolerably heavy, and must be reduced. That is true; but to reduce it, you must come to the House of Commons, and the Commons are not there, and you come in vain.

Another tells you that the debt is an incubus that weighs fearfully on the energies of the nation; and that this, with the extravagance of the government, must be abated. But how? You have asked and asked for these things for thirty years or more, and in vain; you have to come to the usurpers of your house. And what care they for the national debt? It does not press on them, as we have seen; they have no interest in it, and no fears, if you were to abolish it to-morrow; for, having accumulated it, they have taken care to have nothing to do with it. If you doubt this, examine the following table, taken from Spackman.

AN ACCOUNT of the number of persons interested in the National Debt, arranged in various classes according to the amount of dividends to which they were entitled, made up to October 10, 1839.

Not exceeding	£5	86,560	persons.
"	10	45,174	"
"	50	98,946	"
"	100	26,205	"
"	200	14,816	"
"	300	4,523	"
"	500	2,759	"
"	1,000	1,337	"
"	2,000	384	"
"	3,000	192	"

280,896 persons.

Thus, while there are nearly ninety thousand persons who possess only 5*l.* a-year in the national funds, and above ninety thousand who possess 50*l.* a-year in them, there are only 192 who risk as much as 3000*l.* a-year in them. The aristocracy are not to be found there. They are persons of smaller means—the mites of widows and orphans, and property in trust,—and this makes it easy to understand why government has so freely of late reduced the interest on these securities.

But to proceed. The artisans, labouring night and day for a miserable pittance; the women and children, that slave in your factories; the agricultural labourers, who live in styces, that lords

may live in palaces ; the shopkeepers, who feel the pressure of expenses, and the failure of the outlay of the multitude—all cry free trade, which shall give employment and cheap food : they cry to the aristocrats in the people's house, and they cry in vain.

Others proclaim that the whole people is corrupted by the bribery of these patrician senators, and demand the *universal franchise* ; and in that they demand the true and only remedy. But because some are for this, and some for that, and do not all join in the *heartly rending shout* for the *FRANCHISE—that magic word in which lies the constitution*—that cure for all bribery (for who can bribe thirty millions of people ?)—that guarantee for the steady maintenance of the constitution—for, once in the hands of the totality, the totality will never relinquish it again—they cry, but they cry in vain.

Till we obtain the *franchise* we obtain *nothing* ; when we obtain *that* we obtain *everything*. Every petition, every demand, however stern or resolved, that asks for anything short of the *UNIVERSAL FRANCHISE*, is the perpetration of an absurdity, and the greatest of all absurdities. He is just as wise who asks short of this, as if he prayed the Pope to abolish the Catholic religion, or a Jew to give you all he is worth. The aristocracy have usurped the House of Commons—for what ? Just for this very purpose—of resisting the proper demands of the people—of maintaining and perpetuating all the evils for whose removal you pray. It is true the people, combining on some great emergency—driven, as it were, into this combination by some desperate pressure—may alarm the aristocracy into some individual concession, as in the case of the Reform Bill. But this is a stupendous exertion, a violent and convulsive sort of action in the political system, which wrests only, at the point of famine or national ruin, its own rights from the usurping party. Public opinion is said, in this country, to be the actual ruling power ; but it is a fitful and irregular power. Like the Indian, or the boa-constrictor, it is aroused to action only by hunger or imminent impending danger ; at the smallest return of ease it pauses ; it becomes drowsy again, and the mischief goes on for another period. If public opinion really rules, it should lift itself to the necessary height of command, and do its work effectually. That would save us all much trouble. There is but one perfect permanent remedy—but one means of absolute cure for our perpetually recurring evils : *We must have these usurpers out of the people's house, and rule in it ourselves !* and this is to be done only by insisting on *the franchise, the whole franchise, and nothing but the franchise*.

With that we have everything, and are ourselves again !

Heavens! then how easily would all go on! The Augean stable of abuses—of centuries of abuses—what would that be to the zealous hands of all England? The Anti-corn-law League will march up with their petition to the people, in the people's house, and say—"We want the corn-laws abolished!"

"To be sure," says the true national representatives; "it shall be done immediately. Do you want anything more? We are here for the good and prosperity of the nation."

"Oh, yes!" cry a crowd behind—"we want free trade; and plenty to do, and plenty to eat."

"Quite right," say the people's representatives; "you shall have all that. Do you want anything more?"

"Yes! yes!" shout throngs upon throngs, still coming up, yet only half-heard amid the acclamations of wondering crowds, who are astonished beyond all bounds at having discovered the miracle of a parliament that is reasonable and grants petitions!

"Yes! yes!" exclaim throngs on throngs. "*We* want the abolition of all sinecures, unmerited pensions, and overpaid salaries." "*And we* want all sorts of taxes reduced;" "*and we* want the game-laws abolished, and the poor-law reformed, and the wrongs of Ireland redressed, that she may rejoice with us."

"We 'll see to all that, as fast as possible," says the people's house.

"*And we*," shouts another crowd, "want—Down with the aristocrats, and their ill-gotten property given to the poor!"

"Stop there!" cries the house—"to that we say—No! Whether in the course of deliberate and wise legislation we may not discover some mode of establishing a *second* house of parliament, we will not yet say, but property, however got, brave people, is sacred! It is sacred to the peace and union of society. Let that stand fast:—we seek no man's property—we covet no man's goods;—but we will abolish the disgraceful law of primogeniture—a gross injustice in families, and in the nation; and that abolished, all property will soon flow into the best and most healthful channel. With just laws there must arise every fair opportunity for enterprise, and every man will have his chance to acquire as much as he will need, and rise as far as his merit will bear him."

And here, lost in the glorious vision—charmed with the glorious language of a genuine House of Commons—that "full, free, and uninfluenced representation of the people," never yet seen for these one hundred and fifty years, except in the vision of the patriot or the poet—I let my pen fall. The History of the Aristocracy of England is before the public. Let its nature, deeds, and results be well weighed; but when the ruin it has wrought, the crimes

it has perpetrated, the moral guilt and the debt which it has heaped upon the nation, be fully comprehended ;—when all its follies, its treason to its high trust, its sins against God and against man, be wholly seen and felt—*then* let the *people* reflect that *they* also have their share of that guilt to answer for ; for what the aristocracy have *done* they have too tamely *suffered*. And if this course of national injustice still be persisted in ; if the destinies of this great nation shall still be intrusted to usurping hands ; if the poor shall still suffer by millions for the oppressions of a few ; then great, my fellow-countrymen, will be your responsibility at the bar of humanity and of God. You have but to *will it*, and you can reclaim your own birthright—the House of Commons, and the general franchise, which can alone maintain its purity. If you *will* do your own business you *may* do it, and render justice to your millions of fellow-men and of posterity. If you will still have an aristocracy, leave them at least to enjoy their estates, and allow them not to ruin the estate of the nation. Forward, then, fellow-countrymen, to the achievement of the franchise, and with it to freedom and an end to all your sorrows ! You are not the aggressive party : you but defend your own. That power which you seek to reduce to its proper province in the state, is the aggressive party ; a power which has been most admirably described by a senator on the other side of the channel. During the sitting of the French Chambers, in the last year, General Foy, in his speech before that assembly, made use of the word “aristocracy.” A voice from the ministerial side asked for a definition of the word. The General made a short pause, and then exclaimed—“Aristocracy, in the nineteenth century, is the league, the coalition of those who wish to consume without producing, live without working, occupy all public places without becoming competent to fill them, and seize upon all honours without meriting them—that is aristocracy !” You meditate then, I repeat, no attack on any one : you but reclaim your heritage, and thrust back this encroaching aristocracy into its own ancient and legitimate bounds.

THE END.

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